
ECHOING MARGINALISED VOICE

Stories from Eastern Indonesia

Echoing Marginalised Voice:
Stories from Eastern Indonesia

A collection of six civil society organisations research in the
“Echoing Evidence: Action Research for Inclusive Participation”
by VOICE and CIPG.

Echoing Marginalised Voice: Stories from Eastern Indonesia.

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ECHOING MARGINALISED VOICE: AN INTRODUCTION

Echoing evidence, research action for inclusive participation.

Public policy is ideally created integrally and comprehensively throughout every influential aspect. Public participation is an absolute precondition to ensure that the process is implemented in an inclusive manner. Therefore, evidence-based public policy formulation, particularly in the local context, must be promoted first and foremost by applying local knowledge as basis by local actors.

Nonetheless, communities, especially marginalised communities, find it difficult to participate in the public policy making process. Their voices are often ignored as they are not considered to be strong enough. The presence of civil society organizations (CSOs), in this case, is critical to help voice these marginalized groups' interests. However, this is not without its challenges. Such organizations have various limitations in their organisational governance, including in their capacity.¹ One vital point in their efforts to voice marginalized groups' interests is the absence of adequate data as well as the capacity to analyse systematically, leading to frequent question of the credibility of these organizations' work.

From this issue, CIPG designed the VOICE program to increase capacity and credibility of CSOs to support evidence-based advocacy. It is expected that through trainings in the application of critical research methodology, organizations can voice the voices of marginalized groups through systematic and valid evidence-based presentation.

For the robust collection of marginalized voices, these organizations must first know how to conduct a research. Training

¹ Antlöv, Hans & Brinkerhoff, Derick & Rapp, Elke. (2010). Civil Society Capacity Building for Democratic Reform: Experience and Lessons from Indonesia. *Voluntas*. 21. 417-439. 10.1007/s11266-010-9140-x.

on Critical Research Methodology (CREAME) is an initial first step. In general, this five-day training offers lessons on critical research skills and research results dissemination to policy makers and the public. Two members of each organization participate in this training.

After the training, each participant returned to their organisations and proceeded to carry out their research. During the research process of approximately eight months, CIPG conducted both long-distance assistance and regular visits to ensure that their partners' research processes were running well. In addition, local facilitators continued to assist partners intensively.

The research results, which the shorth version you can immediately read, will be used by relevant organizations for dissemination and/or advocacy to policy makers and the public in their respective regions.

Once this program ends, we hope that the six organizations can deliver multiplier effect to other organisations and the public through writings and activities that they'll go on to produce.

We hope you enjoy these six stories!

Jakarta, January 2019

BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING CAPACITY: REFLECTIONS FROM ASSISTANCE PROCESSES

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**DAYA SUDRAJAT AND
ANESTHESIA H. NOVIANDA**

West Nusa Tenggara Region

LESSON NOTES

Daya Sudrajat

Pasirputih

The first time I visited Pasirputih ‘headquarters’ in Pemenang in the coast of North Lombok, I met some of their members who enthusiastically shared about their organization’s work. In addition, they also told me about local issues in Pemenang and even in Lombok Island.

After several correspondences and the first face-to-face discussion with Pasirputih, they expressed their interest to get involved in the *Membunyikan Bukti* (‘Echoing Evidence’) program. Their expectation at the time was to allow Pasirputih members to learn about more structured research methods. The ‘research’ they have been conducting so far were more spontaneous compared to those started with prior planning/design.

This isn’t that hard, I thought at the time. From the initial discussions and several articles, I read from the Pasirputih site, I gained information that they were accustomed to visit communities directly, observe their daily activities and record the results in popular article formats. This indicated that Pasirputih had prior knowledge to conducting research.

As a facilitator, at the beginning, I expected that Pasirputih was able to design research in a structured manner, learn about data collection techniques, analyze findings critically, and organise the result into straightforward reports. Furthermore, I hoped that Pasirputih would be able to apply the lesson learned during the research process in their organisational activities.

During research topic selection to data collection, Pasirputih, represented here by Sibawaihi, Ahmad Ijtihad, and Ahmad Dhoom, was rather creative in terms of substance and technicality in performing research. For instance, when approaching the

community in Segenter Village, Pasirputih first conducted repeat observations to understand the community's habits. This was done to help them collect data, since Pasirputih is often involved in community activities.

June 2018 was my last month to assist Pasirputih as well as the end of the research phase. This was also the month that earthquakes shook West Nusa Tenggara, with North Lombok as one of the most hard-hit areas. Pasirputih, who was preparing the research report at that time, had to put all its work aside. The Lombok earthquake caused a number of field records that hadn't been converted into digital format to be lost.

If I had to make a score on a scale of 0 to 100, I would give Pasirputih an 80 for their research effort. I highly appreciate their creativity during research planning and field data collection processes. In addition, Pasirputih's initiative in persuading community members and locals to become involved in their research must be commended. However, Pasirputih needs to further encouragement to analyse and document their research findings into more formal and readable outputs.

What Pasirputih produced at the end of the research process was somewhat below expectations because the report was not finished on time. However, it was understandable given the *force majeure* that took place. Afterall, the research learning process with Pasirputih went well.

Joint Learning Process: Corrections and Revisions

In general, corrections and improvements are needed in all phases of research, particularly research planning, method selection, and report writing. Both facilitator and Pasirputih went through several discussions to finally formulate the research questions and scope. Discussion to determine the research method was also a challenge because Pasirputih at the time wanted to employ ethnographic methods which were actually unsuitable to answer the organisation's research questions.

As a facilitator, I provided corrections and revisions in two ways, i.e. face-to-face and long-distance. Face-to-face correction and revision were more effective because Pasirputih was responsive during the process. In addition, direct session allowed each member equal opportunity to contribute to the improvement. For instance, in the second facilitator visit in March, Ahmad Dhoom and Ahmad Ijtihad took turns preparing and revising the research instruments.

During long-distance discussion, the facilitator faced a greater challenge. The facilitator provided corrections written as comments in documents sent and through WhatsApp and telephone discussions. Pasirputih was rather undisciplined in responding to the facilitator's corrective comments, especially for the deadlines. In addition, correcting and revising the writing techniques was also a challenge to the facilitator.

Between Research and Change

Initially, Pasirputih's study in Segenter Village was to be used as advocacy material for tourism policies, particularly for North Lombok. Pasirputih had planned to provide recommendations for the local government to create a blueprint for tourism development in Segenter Village. In addition, Pasirputih also recommended a policy to North Lombok government to provide entrepreneurship training for the Segenter Village community so that they can experience the benefits of tourism economy.

However, the Lombok earthquake that occurred at the end of Pasirputih's research altered their initial research assumptions. The interim findings which include mapping of changes in traditional houses must be readjusted since Segenter Village was one of the impacted areas. Moreover, the government and community's focus are on post-earthquake recovery.

Between Partner and Target Group

I saw that Pasirputih has the potential to persuade the community to become involved in their activities. Even for the 'Echoing

Evidence’ research program, Pasirputih had involved the community.

Pasirputih participated in the community’s daily activities following their informal introductions and approach. For example, in March 2018, Pasirputih invited me to see their study site. Prior to doing so, Ahmad Dhoom and Ahmad Ijtihad bought vegetables to cook together with the Segenter Village community.

Once arrived, we cooked and ate together in front of the villager’s house. Several teenage girls in Segenter Village also invited us to have some *rujak* or the traditional fruit salad. Through those informal conversations, Pasirputih explained that the purpose of their visit in the village was to learn research and advocacy together. Ana, one of the Pasirputih members, also invited the women of the village to gather and cook together. The villagers responded enthusiastically.

Pasirputih often told me that the Segenter villagers were very cooperative during the organisation’s research, especially Hambali, who Pasirputih considered to be the “key person” in this process. Hambali introduced Pasirputih to the Segenter Village Head and customary elders and helped explain their presence to the community.

In addition, Pasirputih was keen to attend every ritual in Segenter Village. The community itself didn’t demur to Pasirputih’s presence, including when the organisation took pictures. Instead, the community proactively referred potential interviewees to Pasirputih.

AMAN Sumbawa

The first time I visited AMAN Sumbawa’s office in Sumbawa Besar, Sumbawa Island in September 2017, I sensed that AMAN Sumbawa had high expectation of the ‘Echoing Evidence’ program. AMAN Sumbawa have assisted numerous indigenous communities

in Sumbawa for years to advocate their rights to lands that belong to indigenous peoples. AMAN Sumbawa's advocacy work had always faced challenges from various groups, particularly from the Sumbawa government itself. Through the 'Echoing Evidence' program, AMAN Sumbawa hoped to gain an alternative step for advocacy, specifically through research.

One of communities that AMAN Sumbawa assists with their advocacy work is the Cek Bocek Indigenous Community. We initially planned to engage the Cek Bocek Indigenous Community as the main target group of this program. However, this could not be carried out since the community consisted mainly of indigenous elders who were not fluent in both oral and written Indonesian.

My initial expectations as facilitator was that AMAN Sumbawa would be able to engage the Cek Bocek Indigenous Community in the research process. At least the community would be involved in discussions during research implementation and data collection. Not only that research and advocacy knowledge transfer among both AMAN Sumbawa members and non-members (Cek Bocek Indigenous Community), but the research and advocacy would also represent the indigenous community's voice.

At the beginning of the program, we asked AMAN Sumbawa that there should be at least one Cek Bocek community member directly involved in the 'Echoing Evidence' program. Jasardi (Head of AMAN Sumbawa), promised that Suryadi, a Cek Bocek indigenous community member working for AMAN Sumbawa at the time, would be engaged in the research and advocacy processes. However, it was a challenge to involve Suryadi or other Cek Bocek community member during the research because communication regarding this process was dominated by Jasardi as Head of AMAN Sumbawa.

In late March 2018, AMAN Sumbawa reshuffled their 'Echoing Evidence' team. Irawan, a member of AMAN Sumbawa advocacy team, replaced Suryadi's role in this study. The reason behind the substitution was that Suryadi moved away, and thus could no longer

be fully involved. Although Irawan was more helpful during the research process and able to counterbalance Jasardi (he didn't hesitate to express his opinions and was able to write down his ideas), it was still unfortunate that no Cek Bocek Indigenous Community representative was involved directly in the 'Echoing Evidence' program.

From the research design to the end of the process, I gave AMAN Sumbawa 60 for a score because there were many nonconformities between the initial expectations and current realities. In terms of knowledge transfer, knowledge of AMAN Sumbawa's research direction was dominated by Jasardi as organisation head. For the research output, AMAN Sumbawa had planned to publish a book to showcase the entire history of the Cek Bocek Community, which is unrealistic to be done in such a short time. It was unfortunate that during the final phase of the research (report writing), AMAN Sumbawa was no longer focused on delivering the output to answer their research question on the ownership of Cek Bocek Indigenous Community's land.

However, AMAN Sumbawa does have potential advocacy network and experience. In the beginning, AMAN Sumbawa had an overview of a strong advocacy plan. I also appreciate AMAN Sumbawa for learning to engage Cek Bocek Indigenous Community in their research although indirectly. For instance, AMAN Sumbawa always discussed the research program conducted in the Cek Bocek Indigenous Community through *rapulung adat* (customary discussion) with the community.

Joint Learning Process: Revisions and Corrections

During the whole research process with AMAN Sumbawa, the facilitator's challenges began with providing input on their main topic. AMAN Sumbawa had planned to discuss the entire Cek Bocek Indigenous Community story. To better define the research focus, I suggested to use ethnohistoric approach to narrate the history of Cek Bocek Indigenous Community land ownership from the community's perspective.

AMAN Sumbawa found it hard to respond on remote revisions that came in bulk at once. By March 2018, on the second facilitator visit, AMAN Sumbawa was finally able to formulate research questions and instrument together with the facilitator. In addition, AMAN Sumbawa, specifically both Jasardi and Irawan, showed a strong motivation to learn to pour their ideas into writings.

Although the research questions and instruments were explicit, it was still difficult for the facilitator to control the data collection process, because instead of sending the raw field data, AMAN Sumbawa sent them in the research report. In the report, they still provided general description of the Cek Bocek Indigenous Community history without discussing the community land ownership dynamics.

During the research evaluation phase, AMAN Sumbawa explained their challenges in responding to the revisions. They admitted being confused to receive different inputs from the facilitator and local consultant. The challenge was particularly evident for data analysis and writing up research results. Understanding the different opinions between facilitator and local consultant, I let AMAN Sumbawa make their own decision on the revisions to incorporate based on their advocacy objectives.

Between ‘Research’ and ‘Change’

Initially, AMAN Sumbawa’s advocacy target was local regulation issuance on the recognition of indigenous peoples in Sumbawa Island. Local government’s recognition of the Cek Bocek Indigenous Community is critical to resolve conflict between the indigenous community and mining company, Newmont.

As a step toward advocacy, AMAN Sumbawa formulated its research topic about the Cek Bocek Indigenous Community’s relationship with their land through a historical perspective. AMAN Sumbawa wanted to show the significance of land to Cek Bocek indigenous community, not only to provide for their lives, but also for spiritual purposes. Through this research topic, AMAN

Sumbawa would be delivering novelty to other studies that has been done on the Cek Bocek Indigenous Community. Previous studies on this community mostly focused on land conflict between the indigenous people and mining company.

AMAN Sumbawa's research findings must be deepened and sharpened to 'echo' the interest of the Cek Bocek Indigenous Community of their land. The findings generated so far could only provide a general description and has yet to touch on the community's relationship with their land. If this can be achieved, a study on the relationship between the Cek Bocek Indigenous Community and their land could build the awareness of the Sumbawa community of the importance of indigenous customary land and forest sustainability. Furthermore, it was expected that community's 'collective awareness' would encourage the government to prepare local regulation accommodating the interests of indigenous peoples in Sumbawa Island.

SEARCHING FOR CHANGE

Anesthesia H. Novianda

Joining the Change

Having heard of some of CIPG's programs, I note that VOICE team's journey has the most unique story. The first time that the CIPG team introduced me to VOICE and this program in 2017, I noticed the ambitious agenda, especially for CIPG, i.e. "Echoing Evidence". How loud would 'evidence' resonate? At the time it was one of my tasks as the organisation's communication staff.

In order to understand the context and prepare the communication agenda to be implemented, I was often involved in the VOICE team's internal meetings. This participation gave an understanding of some information provided by each CIPG facilitator about VOICE partners in East Nusa Tenggara, South Sulawesi, and West Nusa Tenggara. The information I had was surely different from that of other CIPG facilitators. VOICE's CIPG facilitators had more in-depth information and relationship with their regional partners.

Part of the Change

I took parts of the journey to find partner, local facilitator, as well as research scheduling process as communication material, and the rest as my introduction to CSOs. Surprisingly, in 2018 I became an actor in VOICE team's unique story. The role of CIPG facilitator for West Nusa Tenggara from VOICE's internal team was previously held by Daya, whom I later replaced. From that point on, I am continuing the VOICE story as local facilitator for West Nusa Tenggara.

There was no difficulty in the knowledge transfer from Daya to me since I already had sufficient information on partners, main research topic, and regional partner facilitators when I was involved in communication agenda. Pasirputih Community and AMAN Sumbawa were already familiar as the names West Nusa Tenggara

VOICE's partners. VOICE, which was halfway in its journey at the time, was to complete the rest of its research phase and move on to the advocacy phase.

I replaced Daya on July 2018, around the same time as the partner's final report writing phase. At this time, I had not completely taken over the partner assistance work. Assistance for the research phase was still done by Daya as I was preparing to assist during the advocacy phase. Even so, the partners had been informed that there was going to be a change in CIPG facilitators. I was introduced to the partners and local facilitator (Anhar) by email and WhatsApp.

In reality, the CIPG team's agenda to complete the research by July was not met. Therefore, I was assigned as research facilitator for both partners and to continue Daya's work. During this phase, conducting assistance without prior face-to-face meeting was a challenge for the local partners, consultant, and me. Soon other challenges followed. An earthquake hit our partners in West Nusa Tenggara, local facilitator (Anhar), and our team in Pasirputih was the hardest hit. Completing the research report had to be postponed. Communication lines with Anhar and Pasirputih were down. Although also affected, AMAN Sumbawa was still able to make corrections based on Daya's input.

CIPG's next agenda was to hold an advocacy workshop in late August. This workshop was my chance to directly meet and get to know the partners and Anhar as local facilitator, and to their experiences about obstacles and difficulties during the writing process. Unfortunately, Anhar could not attend the workshop so I couldn't get information other than information from Daya about the partner's research process.

After the advocacy workshop meeting, the assistance process was smoother. The distance between the partners and I had dissipated. However, it was still difficult to get in touch with Anhar, the local facilitator, and so I contacted the partners directly to revise their research reports. The research report assistance largely referred to Daya's revisions in the hope that this would help the report completion without further extending the already delayed timeline.

The assistance process which took place from August to October provided me with a number of challenges during the partner's research report phase.

1. Time discipline. A good program requires a working timeline, and so does VOICE. The first thing I had to do was to ensure that Pasirputih and AMAN Sumbawa submit their reports according to the deadlines, given that these West Nusa Tenggara partners were behind the other regions due to the disaster that postponed the report writing process for several weeks. Unfortunately, both organisations were unable to practice time discipline. I had to remind them repeatedly to send their updated reports.
2. Robust critical framework application. A robust critical framework would help Pasirputih and AMAN Sumbawa to write and explain their data, as well as to systematically view certain phenomenon, e.g. describing the origin history of the Cek Bocek indigenous community.
3. Assumptions and jargons. Both partners have advocacy experiences. Their years of experiences composing sentence to mobilize masses or create slogans for movements have become a habit in their writing. VOICE's 'Echoing Evidence' program attempts to challenge partners to conduct advocacy based on certain understood phenomenon. The greatest challenge in this phase was to have partners avoid using assumptive and speculative words.
4. Communication. At the beginning of this article, I discussed much about the initial communication process with partners until the report was completed. There was a perceived distance between both partners and me. Unfortunately, this communication gap was most prominent in AMAN Sumbawa's report. Inputs that Daya and I gave were not entirely carried out by AMAN Sumbawa's researchers. The lack of communication from the local facilitator was also one of the biggest challenges. Anhar's knowledge would have been useful for me because reading the local facilitator report was not sufficient in

itself. However, my attempts at contacting Anhar by phone and WhatsApp were unsuccessful.

Once the entire report writing process was complete, I reviewed the partners' reports and saw they no longer contained assumptive sentences or lengthy run-on sentences with their long-awaited stops. These have been revised into more concise and readable sentences. I felt that the partners have made great progress in writing their research reports as opposed to their first draft. Subsequently, it is essential for AMAN Sumbawa and Pasirputih to apply theory and data that not only support their research. Lastly, research is conducted to understand certain phenomenon, not to eliminate it to support assumptions.

Regards,

AHN

FERZYA FARHAN

Sulawesi Selatan Region

UNDERSTANDING MARGINALISED VOICES

A Reflection in Assisting VOICE Partners during Research

Ferzya Farhan

In the Beginning

Being a facilitator to assist partners in conducting research and advocacy was new for me. Even though CIPG has done a similar activity, personally for me this was a new experience. My prior experience in assisting CSO was only for advocacy programs, and adding a research activity before doing advocacy is what made it different.

At first, the three of us, Daya, Klara, and I were gathered in a room to discuss the activity plan and distribute tasks. The activities were to take place in three regions, i.e. South Sulawesi, West Nusa Tenggara, and East Nusa Tenggara. We were each given time to self-reflect and decide for which region we would be responsible.

We agreed that Klara would be responsible for East Nusa Tenggara since she already had experience in the region. Daya took responsibilities for South Sulawesi because she was interested in women's issues and interested to learn more about Aan Mansur (although they never ended up meeting). I was assigned with West Nusa Tenggara for my experience in minority issues and natural resource conflict.

For the next two years, we were to assist these partners to undergo three phases: research, advocacy, and reflection. However, before the assistance began, first we had to determine whom to assist. Several organisations were already identified during CIPG's activity proposal preparations. However, as the activity progressed, we realised that the organisation selection must be done through a clear assessment.

Therefore, each facilitator made 'profile assessment' of potential organisations. This was the first activity in the 'Goal Attainment'

phase. I created criteria for basis of consideration, such as geographic (where they are), demographic (who they are), psychographic (how they think), behavioural (what they do), and environment (who and what influence them) criteria. In addition, to understand the fundamental conditions of each province, we also collected data of literacy level, social conflict level, and general knowledge including head of region. We obtained the data through desktop study, past CIPG studies, information from colleagues, and direct communication with these organizations.

Once we had several organisations' names, we narrowed down the selection two organisations per province. Each of us created a reference for making our selection based on three aspects, i.e. the issue being in line with VOICE program's objectives, lack of research and advocacy experience, and organization members having sufficient knowledge (extensive though lacking written data) on the issue to be researched.

At this stage we obtained names of organizations to visit. The Active Society Institute (AcSI) and MAUPE Maros Foundation of South Sulawesi, Cek Bocek Seleser Ren Suri Community and Pasirputih Community of West Nusa Tenggara, and Wali Ati (Yasalti) Foundation and Amnaut Bife 'Kuan' Foundation (Yabiku) of East Nusa Tenggara. We had to meet them directly to understand the character of the organizations and target groups.

September 2017. Daya and Nardo visited South Sulawesi as the first region. Mona and I then visited West Nusa Tenggara, while Klara and Fajri traveled to East Nusa Tenggara.

However, at the end of September, I learned that I'm pregnant. I told Mona that I would still go to West Nusa Tenggara even in my first trimester. Mona immediately decided that Daya and I switch our work sites because the prospective partners in South Sulawesi were more accessible and closer together, while the candidates in West Nusa Tenggara were based in two different islands. Upon on this consideration, my trip to West Nusa Tenggara was cancelled and Daya took my place. After returning from South Sulawesi, I met with Daya to discuss the preparations, who to meet, what to

do, and to inform the personnel change for West Nusa Tenggara. Likewise, she shared information on the partners in South Sulawesi after returning from West Nusa Tenggara.

Learning to Assist

For me, this assistance was a learning process. I previously thought that the organisation assistance would often be done face-to-face, but due to certain conditions in this project, this was not the case. Based on previous experiences, assistance would be difficult if the facilitator and the facilitated party didn't have 'connection' built through intensive communication.

Therefore, the 'gap' in CIPG facilitator's role needed to be filled by a qualified local facilitator according to the needs of CIPG and partners in each province. Finding the appropriate local facilitator was another challenge.

First of all, I had to understand AcSI and MAUPE's values, the organisational structure and decision-making processes, and who ran the programs. Only after that could I identify the needs to be met by the local facilitator and the necessary criteria.

Introductions

I had only gotten to know the partners during the first face-to-face meeting at the Critical Research Method (CREAME) training in Makassar in early December 2017.

Accang and Mucha were representing AcSI. They looked like your typical college students who are actively involved in grassroots activities, read thick books, have long discussion about 'how the world works' while drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes. They looked a lot like the people I met when I was a student in Yogyakarta about 6-8 years ago, and several people from similar organisations when I lived in Banda Aceh. I thought, "Well, seem like for AcSI, advocacy will be more challenging than the research work."

Meanwhile Maupe Foundation Maros was represented by Yunita and Uga. Both wore similar clothing and sat side-by-side (other

participants sat randomly) and were silent for nearly the entire time, even when asked directly. A contrast from what I heard that the two were quite vocal when speaking about women's position in society. After further observations, I felt that Maupe would have difficulties in the research.

During CREAME, I paid more attention to Accang, Mucha, Yunita, and Uga's personalities and their capabilities in understanding the material. Before CREAME course began, each participant wrote down their organisations and individual skills. At this point I determined how much the program could expect from them.

Taking from my prior experience in organisation facilitation, I applied the same approach for them. I didn't expect much but continued to encourage the greatest change. I wanted to open up a 'space' to learn instead of dictating. The most important thing in this research phase was, in my opinion, the organisations representatives were able to operate Microsoft Office, at least Word and Excel.

Personnel Substitution

A personal note for the end of December 2017 was that I was too focused on the four representatives and failed to see the risk that organisation would internally decide to replace them.

Once CREAME finished, everyone went back to their organisations and discussed their experiences and work they brought back from the training. The first shocking news came from AcSI. There was little communication because Accang, the director and contact person, spent much time on the field (though I didn't know what he was doing back then). He said he hadn't heard from Mucha, his work partner who couldn't be contacted. I hadn't been able to contact him for a while either. I was worried but pushed the concerns aside and thought optimistically because some people are just the "don't need supervision, just wait and see the results" type. Maybe Mucha was one of them.

Then I learned that Maupe assigned another person to work on this research, called Hera. Hera usually worked on writing news for the organisation's website. Therefore, Mrs. Una (Maupe's director) believed Hera to be sufficiently capable of completing this research phase.

"*Wah, kapalo!* (Acehnese for 'I'm in trouble!') Hera didn't attend the CREAM training", was the first thought that crossed my mind when I heard the news. I asked Yunita and Uga to share their knowledge from the CREAM training to Hera and asked her to read the module.

I was shocked even more upon hearing from AcSI that Mucha... had ghosted. I received this news during the first field visit on late January 2018. 'Ghosting' is a term that used when someone fails to send word or can't be contacted. We are aware that this person is not in danger, but instead no longer wants to be involved in the program. I've often experienced this in organisations back in college, so this was actually a common occurrence. But I was shocked because I wasn't mentally prepared to hear that AcSI would also change their team member, as did Maupe. And instead of cooling down the situation, Accang left and handed over his responsibilities was transferred to Mulyadi and Misda, two new personnel who didn't attended the CREAM training at all.

Was it heard?

To be able to understand, one must be willing to listen first. I decided to listen to the partners to ensure that they are listening to the target group.

AcSI conducted a study on women vendors in Terong Market, while Maupe studied female victims of violence in Maros District. Both organizations had been involved in these issues for years. As a preliminary note, AcSI conducted an ethnographic study in Terong Market in 2009, produced a book (2013) and formed an organization called *Persaudaraan Pedagang Pasar Terong* (SADAR, or the Association of Terong Market Vendors). Meanwhile Maupe Foundation ran *Sekolah Politik Perempuan Maupe* (SPPM, or the

Maupe Women's School of Politics) to promote recognition of and justice for women, as well as to build strong relationship with Women Empowerment and Child Protection Agency (DP3A) to allow them to participate in policy formulations.

These two organisations targeted on two different groups. In Makassar City, AcSI focused on livelihood strategies of women vendors in Terong Market. This was considered to be vital because market activities were on the decline at that time. This was maybe due to the growth of franchises in Makassar. The majority of vendors were women, some of whom were even heads of family. Female victims of violence were the main target group for Maupe. Often these women cannot speak up even if they wanted to. Therefore, Maupe couldn't wait, but instead must seek and approach them so that their voices can be heard.

During assistance process, both organisations created different dynamics. With AcSI that majority of the members were youths, and so I had to be laid-back yet firm. On the other hand, with Maupe I had to be able to properly accommodate these voices while remaining tactical.

There were advantages and disadvantages in every organisation and individual, and this was a process. In terms of time management, kudos to Maupe. Maupe's volunteers were also terrific. Although they didn't have sufficient paralegal, they found other ways to see the victims of violence. Over and over again the volunteers were told to leave homes and even villages. However, Maupe stumbled as there was only one person doing all the work, from desk study, writings and analysing data. How will the data be processed? How is it analysed? What is a critical framework? These questions came up once the data was available.

In contrast, when it comes to time with AcSI, my God! Youths love to procrastinate! Eventually the time came that they absolutely had to finish, and they did! Voila, like magic! Maybe it was because they come from a community who loved reading and having discussions, so it wasn't difficult for them to pour their thoughts

into a writing. However, having been rushed, they were less careful and instead had a 'as long as it submitted' mindset.

Unfortunately, I couldn't fully assist both organizations. For the research phase that (ideally) took place from December 2017 until July 2018, I could only assist them until the end of April 2018 because that May 2018 I gave birth to my baby.

Was it Understood?

Since the research phase wasn't sufficient for the partners to complete their work, I still had some chance to see their hard work and continue assisting them from August to November 2018.

Here, I was able to see whether or not Maupe and AcSI understood the voices they heard. Turned out, AcSI was willing to set aside their initial assumptions and observed how the women vendors addressed the declining market activities. Yet, that was not the voice sounded by the vendors. They believed that this vulnerability is rooted in the lack of solidarity among vendors and lack of enforced regulations. AcSI finally understood this and continued with their advocacy work with greater preparations, as they were successful in reviving the market constituents, i.e. the Association of Terong Market Vendors.

For Maupe, from this new experience, they appeared readier to raise awareness about 'violence' against women. This research result became the basis to bring out other female violence victims' voices who were still unable to speak out.

At the end of the research, once again I contemplated. The 'space' for learning can be formed well if there is an initiative to learn. But as long as there is no initiative, dictation would still be the most appropriate way to learn.

Tabik (Regards).

KLARA ESTI

East Nusa Tenggara Region

OF DEMANDS AND GUIDANCE

A Brief Note on Facilitating Partners in East Nusa Tenggara

Klara Esti

Being a facilitator is like planting a seed without knowing what plant it is. The main challenge was getting to know the assisted partners to optimise their capacities. But that metaphor may be too much.

Our partners in East Nusa Tenggara are Wali Ati Foundation (Yasalti) and Amnaut Bife 'Kuan' Foundation (Yabiku). Yasalti is based in Waingapu, East Sumba in Sumba Island. Yasalti was founded in 2002 and focuses on marginalized people's access to basic services, public service effectiveness, and sustainable governance. Yabiku is based in Kefamenanu, North Central Timor in Timor Island. Established in 2002, Yabiku focuses on women's issue and is active in assisting female victims of violence and women's access to natural resources management.

Both organizations are accustomed to carrying out advocacy programs. Advocacy aims to change something, not first and foremost to understand the what, who, where, how, and why something is. This tendency was clear since the proposal phase. Claims, assumptions, and jargon all flowed into their background, as if everything was a certainty, i.e. patriarchy causes violence against women, tradition puts women in the corner, and society is apathetic to children's education, etc. These claims, assumptions, and jargons lined up without any referenced sources. The research objective just dove into advocacy:

So that must fight for justice for violence victims, we must ensure equality of access for women, and so on and so forth. There is a sense of urgency in changing things instead of understanding things in first place.

If everything is so certain, then what's the purpose of research? And so, we've arrived at the **first challenge: to help Yabiku and**

Yasalti understand that research is conducted to help us understand the phenomenon instead of changing it. Advocacy research itself isn't merely driven by fiery ambitions to change something that are perceived or assumed to be wrong. It is the researcher's task to link these two points: (1) Reigning in any assessment or assumption for the sake of obtaining information that illustrates the reality as accurately as possible, and (2) choosing a side between these moments. Researchers must be diligent and dive into the reality and take a step back to reflect upon that reality and record it all.

In addition, there are research demands to maintain argument coherence based on rigorous data collection and data analysis methods. Therefore, research designing process is critical. This was exactly the **second challenge: to make Yabiku and Yasalti members understand the importance of rigorous research design.** Formulating the appropriate research questions itself is challenging. For the Yabiku and Yasalti researchers, selecting questions ('why' questions to seek out the cause, 'how' questions to understand processes, etc.) turned out be no easy task.

Phone consultations and one face-to-face meeting on January 2018 were apparently not enough to build their awareness. I guessed it was partly because the characteristics of research are different from advocacy, which tends to be flexible. In addition, Yasalti and Yabiku's experiences were mostly as data collectors or, as the more sophisticated term is, enumerator.

Luckily, since March 2018, I've had an ally who was even firmer in making sure that our East Nusa Tenggara partners understood the importance of detailed and rigorous research design. He said, and I quote,

"Research design is part of the research. It covers desktop study, preliminary data analysis, to asking critical questions, analysis methods, data collection methods, etc."

- Torry Kuswardono, electronic post, 6 March 2018

For this matter, working with local facilitator who shares the same ambition (or may be vision?) with CIPG and VOICE was really useful, as well as to help ask about the partners' research progress.

The third challenge, and perhaps the biggest challenge, **is the East Nusa Tenggara context itself.**

Let's start with logistics. A two-day face-to-face meeting with colleagues from Yabiku and Yasalti can take an entire week. The first day is the leg from Jakarta to Waingapu, which surely can take half a day before meeting Yasalti in Waingapu. The second day is spent with Yasalti in Waingapu. The third day is spent with Yasalti in Waingapu or taking an afternoon flight to Kupang continued with a 5-6 hours land trip to Kefamenanu. Days four and five are for meeting with Yabiku. Day six is with Yabiku and then off to Kupang for a 5-6 hours land journey. The trip ends with flying to Jakarta on the seventh day. It is for this reason that CIPG decided to cancel the third CIPG facilitator visit planned for June 2018 and instead allocate its resources to finance a visit by a local facilitator.

Both partners are based in two different islands, each having their distinct social, cultural, economic, and political contexts. I had to read much about East Sumba District and North Central Timor Subdistrict to be able to have better discussions with Yabiku and Yasalti. Having spent a month in Kupang in 2014 and familiar with its dialect, I practiced speaking in the Kupang dialect to communicate with my colleagues from Yabiku. Apparently, this was useful in building our communication. It wasn't so difficult for me to understand my Yasalti counterparts either. Of course, this is all my point of view. When they conversed in Meto or Sumba languages, I would say to myself, "*aduh e, mampus su, beta sonde mangarti lai dong bacakap apa* (Dear me, I have no idea what they're talking about)". Again, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to meet NGOs, i.e. CIS (Circle of Imagine Society) Timor, [IRGSC](#) (Institute of Resource Governance and Social Change) and [Pikul](#) who are willing to share their knowledge, experience and reading material to help me understand East Nusa Tenggara.

The fun continues!

The fourth challenge was that partners did not have good understanding of critical framework, thus data collection was difficult. As it turned out, extracting facts and partners' understandings of the research problem scope required much time when in fact both organizations have extensive information and knowledge of their research topics. During the second face-to-face consultation (March 2018) Yasalti and Yabiku didn't seem to understand what data and information they need to answer their research questions. Inevitably, the facilitator had to help them develop their critical frameworks.

We suggested that Yabiku analysed incidents of violence through progression of disaster, i.e. factors of vulnerability, triggers, acts of violence, impacts, resolutions and justice for survivors. We proposed that Yasalti uncover the aspirations of teenagers and youths through the perspective of the right to self-determination along with its aspects. Naturally, when Yasalti was having trouble, we also helped them classify their interview questions into specific themes. We thought that the critical framework was an adequate guide for data completion and as analysis tool for our partners.

However, our ideal condition was based on a number of assumptions, such as the following.

Discipline in every data collection step. In their research proposal, Yasalti planned to apply ethnography by living with a teenager's family for a certain duration to obtain first-hand experience about the research subject's daily life. It appeared that the research team didn't fully understand ethnographic principles. And since there might have been other demanding programs in the organisation, the team wasn't able to optimally carry out this ethnography method.

Attention to data details. Yasalti submitted their interview and observation notes that only contained bits of information and failed to describe the context comprehensively. In result, the Yasalti team

itself didn't know how to identify interesting findings from its research. The facilitators, particularly me who was still scrambling to better understand East Sumba, bombarded Yasalti with endless questions. From this point on we learned that the majority of villagers in Lairuru Village (research site) practice the Marapu religion. Their children, attending formal elementary to junior high education, have no choice but take either Protestant or Catholic classes to obtain a grade for religious class.

Yabiku's case was more complicated. There was a huge gap among the level of data detail for the villages, even though the case analysis design required complete timelines. Had we known this from the beginning, the facilitator could have suggested a different research design.

In addition, Yabiku researchers were inconsistent with the number of domestic violence cases in two villages. Upon further investigation, it turned out that domestic violence cases from other villages outside the study site were also reported to village paralegals in the study village, and thus this data was also recorded in the assistance data.

Good communication between partner and facilitator. There was a 3-week period where partners didn't share any research progress report, although I tirelessly hassled them through emails, phone calls, and text messages. Hey, I'm not a psychic! If you don't tell me about your difficulties, how are we supposed to help you? Later on, we realised that it was easier for Yabiku and Yasalti colleagues to have and understand discussions through face-to-face lessons. Therefore, we only learned of their difficulties in data collection and analysis when Mr. Torry finally conducted face-to-face assistance.

The fifth challenge: I insisted on perfection or something close to it (although no one is perfect but God, there's nothing wrong for humans to strive for it). Reading the report draft – with an abundance of typos, run-on sentences with heaps of conjunctions, inaccurate data, chaotic data presentation, and

unclear arguments – was torture to me. We spent much energy attempting to understand the substance of the poor writing. We collected writing tips and examples based on their grammatical errors. We also asked numerous questions to check their meticulousness in processing data and argument logic, and to ensure that they were not ignoring facts to put forth their own assumptions. These cases are some examples:

Initially, Yabiku assumed that women were always the victims of violence. But in fact, their case analysis showed that one woman was actually the perpetrator of domestic violence. How was this possible? Apparently, this woman's family is wealthier than her husband's, and therefore she has greater control over her household.

Yasalti stated that Lairuru youths quit school because their parents do not realize the importance of education. After 'forcing' them to carefully reexamine their interviews with the parents, it turned out that parents understand the importance of education and want to support their children's education, but the cost of high school and university is too much for the parents who live from paycheck to paycheck.

From these aforementioned cases, we realised that Yabiku and Yasalti were both having difficulties reading and interpreting their data. Both teams also found it hard to use the data they had to answer the research questions. The facilitator repeatedly asked, "What is the most interesting or fascinating finding you got?". The answers we got were either smiles (for Mr. Torry during his face-to-face meetings) or silence (for me in Jakarta relying on emails, phone calls and text messages). Once again, the facilitators had to guide them using various tools, such as the onion model to describe generative mechanisms, visualization for relevance among findings, and tables for policy analysis and to see linkages between research question, findings, conclusion, and recommendations. All in all, **demanding something of the partners is easy, but guiding**

them to scrutinize their data until they see patterns is a hard thing to do.

In the midst of these challenges, there were moments when facilitators felt insecure. Were we interfering too much in our partners' research process? It felt like we were behaving as if we were the primary researchers who, from time to time, nag about the research progress, challenge their way of thinking, inspect their raw data, and even give examples on how to formulate the data collected into stories. Perhaps, I was the one who didn't know my place, demanding novice researchers ignite their enthusiasm to be full of curiosity, driven, proactive, then I expected them to be encouraged to have many initiatives, be meticulous in examining data, and produce well-written research reports.

To this point, the most evident progress in our partners is their writing abilities. At first, they were cramming loads of ideas into a single paragraph filled with run-on sentences. Now they are able to write a paragraph containing one main idea and more concise sentences. Meanwhile, the partner's research capacities still need further honing through intensive assistance. We must keep in mind that research capacity development is not instant. The Yabiku and Yasalti teams involved in this program are still fairly inexperienced in conducting research from start (design stage) to finish (writing research report).

I hope that this process of learning to conduct research can assist CSOs – especially those claiming to help defend marginal groups – to examine themselves. They should routinely take stock of the facts whether the voice they're resonating are truly the voices of the marginalized groups (and not merely their own organization's agenda). Simply put, if all research skills are forgotten, then at least they still retain the discipline in data checking.

That's not a pipe dream, is it?

April-August-December 2018,

Warm greetings from stuffy Jakarta

Klara Esti

CIPG-VOICE facilitator for East Nusa Tenggara Partners

NURHADY SIRIMOROK

South Sulawesi Region

HOW VOICE TAKES ON SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Nurhady Sirimorok

In my opinion, the VOICE program as implemented by CIPG and its South Sulawesi partners is a blessing, at least for partner organisations and community groups where our partners work. As opposed to most ‘central’ programs going to ‘subnational’ CSOs, VOICE is more open in terms of allowing the partners’ focus issues to be determined by partners’ research. With such approach, VOICE places its partners in a relatively equal relationship, helps find specific issues for partners and community groups in their respective areas, and encourages capacity development for partner organizations on issues in their work. It’s rare to encounter these phenomena, or it even appears as a reverse of the mainstream (development programme). This article will spend more focus on our partners’ work, their reflection, and the importance of the VOICE program for the partner organizations’ work.

Let us begin with a background illustration about local CSO’s tendency that, I should mention it from the start, is more of a sketch. This illustration comes from my personal experience for almost two decades working with CSOs, in which I’ve seen this phenomenon frequently taking place. Programs from ‘central’ arrives with certain specific issues, critical and activity frameworks that have been adjusted to these issues, and not uncommonly, even implementation methods. They come with completed plans which leave little space (if any) for contextualisation. With this design, they search for local partners who are able to implement all this on the ground. What happens next was, among others, problems of ‘missing the target’, partner organisations cannot grow or even downsize, and prolonged dependence on central project funding agency. Let us look at the effects one by one.

First of all, by bringing in certain focus issues to a certain area, other issues that may even be more important to the target community are likely to be ignored. Even if contextualization occurs, it is

usually limited project specific issues. For instance, rapid assessment is conducted to find out more about conditions in the target site before program or project begins – for monitoring evaluation needs – related to the specific issues determined by project developer. If the rapid assessment finds a more pressing issue for the target group than the ‘central’-picked issue, the best way for partners to stay on the project path – and thus perform well – is to ignore these issues.

Second, partner organizations that are tasked merely as implementers for plans developed ‘out there’ will eventually adapt. They will study plan documents, conduct workshops and, if needed, hire skilled external staffs or ‘experts’ if the organization’s internal capacity cannot do the specific work required by the program. After finishing the program, the skilled staff leaves with little knowledge and skills, because usually they’ll be more occupied with completing the work with good performance. This is more common when an organisation runs a program that is far beyond their issue, location and systems of concern. This kind of situation often trickles down to the lowest level, i.e. when partners work with community (organisations) in the program site. So, it is very likely for partner organizations that from the beginning have dealt with certain issues, areas and community groups, then just jump onto other issues, areas and groups. As such, they will lose focus and opportunity to consistently implement the organization’s vision and mission.

Even in some cases, they lose staff after a number of ‘by-order’ programs are finished. On the other hand, the skills, networks and knowledge obtained during the duration of the program are not useful for their earlier work, even potentially deflecting the direction of their organisation. More than a few organizations have changed directions or ghosted after going through similar programs.

Third, by working on such top-down programs, local organizations slowly become dependent. They slowly lose their ability to survive, the ethics that once led to the organization’s establishment and growth to be distracted by work other than the main focus of their

previous work. If this continues, the knowledge, skill and personnel they need also change along with the implementation of the 'outside' designed program. Their ability to think will gradually become limited to the central-fed critical and activity frameworks.

Among CSOs in developing regions, there is a running joke that refers to these organizations or individuals as 'servant tool', because wherever they go, they'd only campaign or could only use certain tools 'taught' in trainings from funding agencies. This joke appropriately illustrates a dependence on knowledge and skills. Their work so far may not necessarily be in line with these tools, and the skills and knowledge they've developed may be irrelevant to the program. And while they have yet to master their new knowledge and skills, their previous knowledge and skills slowly dissipate. Surely not all these tools are useless, but there are at least two levels of the problem. First, it could be that these tools are brought in through one project to a community with a need for a different set of tools. Second, the tools are used based on memorisation and applied everywhere with little contextualization, modification, or combination with other tools as needed of the ground.

The symptoms explained above have received much criticism, although they still persist. Various frameworks and tools related to participation, climate change, disaster risk mitigation, and others, are oft criticized but are still around. Critics on the basic concepts of these tools have been circulating for even longer that these tools have been around. For example, critics on the social model², the concept of participation³, resilience⁴, and others.

2 See: John Harriss. 2001. *Depoliticising Development*. Delhi: Leftward; Ben Fine. 2001. *Social Capital Versus Social Theory: Political Economy and Social Sciences at the Turn of the Millenium*. London: Routledge.

3 See: Cooke dan Kothari (eds.). 2000. *Participation: The New Tyranny?*. London: Zed Books; Hickey dan Mohan (eds). 2004. *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation*. London: Zed Books.

4 See: Bene, et. al. 2012. "Resilience: New Utopia or New Tyranny? Reflection about the Potentials and Limits of the Concept of Resilience in Relation to Vulnerability Reduction Programmes". IDS Working Paper 405. Sussex: Institute of Development Studies.

VOICE Reversing the Mainstream

CIPG reverses the mainstream tendency as previously described. The VOICE program began by searching for partners in three regions. Upon finding these partners, CIPG requested them to research the issues that communities face in the partners' work sites. CIPG did not find any specific issues, only named their program target groups marginalised communities – who have been the partners' main targets. CIPG did not determine a specific framework, but instead offered relevant alternative research and advocacy methods to urge partners to find these specific issues and later campaign on these issues. This rarely happens. CIPG provides specific and adequate time and financial support for research.

I have noted at least three advantages to this approach. First, this type of workplaces partners as equal peers. VOICE positions its partners not only as implementers in a hierarchy, but instead as colleagues of equal standing. This is shown in the way that partners are free to identify their issues by first carrying out research studies. During the research, partners are free to determine their methods as needed, and a series of workshops were designed based on these research needs. That was the reason for both South Sulawesi partners to select relatively different methods in their studies. In addition, the routine consultation and monitoring followed these needs – only to sharpen the partners' design, data collection, analysis, and reporting.⁵ I believe these are indeed breakthroughs.

Secondly, VOICE can and have (to a certain level) deepened the knowledge of the partners' target community groups. Along the research process, partners were encouraged to read, collect information, and inspect issues they found in their respective community groups. The fact that the partners already had preliminary knowledge of the communities in their work site did not necessarily mean that this information was organized systematically along with supporting data.

⁵ For these consultation needs, VOICE purposely chose to hold consultations in areas which have, in a number of aspects, closer link with the program work subject's issues, partners and community groups.

The conclusion points that often came up during discussions with partners may not necessarily be representative of the community's conditions, and there was little opportunity to consider which of the numerous conclusion points were most important to the community groups. In addition, the inherent biases brought by previously introduced critical thinking or tools to the partners – especially if lacking support from robust supporting data – may conceal critical issues or have them be seen as negligible.

Third, this process has surely built partner organization's capacity, both their research capacity as well ability to think critically when doing advocacy work. This research and scientific thinking become an invaluable capital for partner organizations in implementing future advocacy work. One important element to note here is that through VOICE, partners learned to research relatively new routes: through evidence-based advocacy. Not to mention that the entire research process, from research design, data collection, analysis and report writing, were done by the partners while CPIG act as facilitators. This is critical because in many research works, we have often seen local partners are positioned merely as data collectors to then share this data to other stakeholders, such as partners central office or their local branches. In effect, they are not trained to doing analysis or reporting research results. In VOICE, partners are urged to do their own analysis of their own findings, then write the results, and later maybe use them in their advocacy work. Their work becomes comprehensive.

How Research was Done

Along the research process, partners came across challenges, part of which they overcame. These numerous challenges are normal noting the partners and social backgrounds explained below. VOICE anticipated these problems by holding intensive consultation forums with partners; thus, a number of the challenges described below can be well managed by partners. Therefore, the explanation below aims to light the number of areas of difficulties for partners, or in other words, this brief account illustrates the 'trail of learning' by partners, which I imagine can be a point of reflection for each organisation.

Designing the research. During this stage, it seems that both partners must work harder, and maybe fail a few times. It was clear that both partners have yet to possess in-depth grasp of relevant concepts and theories and in result had difficulties designing the critical framework that would answer their questions. In the Maupe case, question formulation still lacked conceptualisation considering (I would imagine) the numerous studies they've done. In result, the research question formulated was too broad or lacked 'qualifications': these are boundaries that would be useful to, among others, determine scope, analytical viewpoint, and instrument design. The examples below may be able to explain these issues.

Maupe's initial research design made it hard for them to answer *why* violence were done toward women. The trouble was that they asked this question in their survey along with a series of response options that did not undergo adequate conceptualisation (and contextualisation). With such instrument design, during the data collection process the enumerators could only rely on their own personal knowledge to determine the selected answer based on respondents' stories. This question was not even listed in the in-depth interview question guidelines, a method more fitting to ask a 'why' question.

In addition, the designation of 'customary figures' as a special informant segment was also problematic in my opinion, because who were the people regarded as 'customary figures' in this study? Were they men or women, and from what social standing, and according to whose point of view? Was their knowledge still relevant or influential to many others? Or was their understanding relevant to violence against women sufficient? And more importantly, what is the 'customary' or 'traditional' meant here? All these questions arose because the concept of 'customary figure' did not undergo a rigorous conceptualization process.⁶

⁶ AcSI began its research late when I was had first begun, and therefore they still had time to invite me finalise their research design and instrument, and attend a survey enumerator team workshop before doing field work. I helped to correct unclear or out-of-place sections, such as unclear informant clusters or formulate potentially misinterpreted or abstract questions. The enumerator team also had an opportunity to ask questions about rapport-building and probing strategy developments, clarifying concepts to use in the instrument, and others.

Data collection. Maupe has many field personnel and therefore have completed their surveys in every subdistrict in Maros District since the end of March. On the other hand, AcSI initially started with some missteps due to a lack of personnel. Once they've recruited enumerators, their survey went smoothly. They completed this stage much later than Maupe. Both team's ability to complete their surveys were supported by their proximity and/or previous contact with communities of their research targets. The number of problems that came up during data collection should be noted here.

First is the ability to probe during in-depth interviews. It was relatively easy for partners to build their rapports because they've had previous contact with the research target community (AcSI), or similar identities (they were all women, such was the case for Maupe). But their attempt to delve into the informants' answers did not go smoothly, therefore producing answers that lacked depth. The partners could not explain to me further when they were asked about these questions due to this problem. Thankfully their proximity with the study subject made it possible for them to redo a number of interviews.

Another obvious problem with the partners is minimum triangulation. For example, during interviews with victims and perpetrators Maupe did not attempt to interview informants of the same cases (for example, interviewing the husband *and* wife who were the perpetrator and victim of one incident of violence). This makes constructing the complete picture by both sides even more difficult. This was evident when the Maupe team interviewed the husband who only told half of the story and in a version that showed him in positive light. This weakness was uncovered during a discussion with the Maros District Agency for Women Empowerment and Child Protection, who happened to be handling this case. This indicates a lack of probing to clarify the event.

Maupe's troubles stemmed from a methodologic tendency of going after the numbers, or to seek validity based on the 'representative population'. And so 'representative information' (quality and depth of relevant quantitative data representing sample segments from various population clusters) lags behind. This was evident in the

number of in-depth interview respondents of 77 people. This number could be a positive thing if supported by a number of interviewers of equal capacity, which was apparently missing.⁷

Data analysis and interpretation. Partners faced tough challenges when dealing with data. When the survey data had been collected, they were able to process these data with relative ease but found it difficult to interpret or give meaning to their results. Their earlier draft called 'Interpretation of Preliminary Research Data' lacked any interpretation of nearly all survey data units, and instead only contained data analysis results or percentage distribution of each data unit. When I suggested them to interpret every data unit and review the overlaps between each data unit, the interpretation produced was a return to their comfort zone of general formulations commonly found in circles focusing on themes like those of our partners. At this point, it might have been that lack of reference (theoretical and/or analytical reading of relevant case studies) limited their ability to interpret the data processed. This included, what did it mean when a family's purchase items are mostly food products (AcSI) or what did it mean if the majority of perpetrators of violence against women were people close to the victims (Maupe).

Another issue is a tendency to get lost in the details. For instance, AcSI's first two chapters were different from the chapters they wrote during the design phase. It was possible to modify early chapters following data collection and analysis to a certain degree, but this can potentially cause further confusion, whether for readers or the writers themselves: parts of these two early chapters became unaligned with the instrument design of the research itself, and with the data and interpretation sections as well.⁸

⁷ To manage the situation and the upcoming deadline, I suggested the partner to reduce the number of in-depth interview informants and collect a sample of informants most able to share stories representative of their population clusters, by first determining the most relevant information cluster categories (e.g. based on social standing of female victims, geographical distribution, types of violence, etc.).

⁸ Therefore, I asked them to review their both chapters in their draft and review their initial design and instrument.

All these issues created numerous problems that our partners encountered during report writing. For example, in lengthy articles with minimum analysis content: tendency to aim for a thick report instead of the logic of systematically arriving at a conclusion based on the report's start to finish. At this point I repeatedly reminded them to always refer to the design and instruments in data organization and interpretation, and that the objective of a research was to answer the research question. Therefore, all the data collected must be analysed based on these objectives. Another difficulty was to find linkages between findings in different data units. Lack of vocabulary was also evident in their attempt to provide comments or interpretation for quantitative and qualitative data which made it hard for the partners to formulate the observed phenomenon, and to formulate abstractions from the links in these phenomena.

Fighting the Social Structure

All the challenges that the partners face was not out of the blue, but instead originated from the workings of the social structure⁹ that encompassed them: education structure, CSOs' work tendencies, and local community institutions. Our education system still prioritized memorization than discussions for reaching agreements which lead to difficulties in analysing – as experienced not only by partners. For several years I was involved in a field research training program for high school students and during that program, the greatest weakness that needed further attention was the ability to analyse findings. Once there was a participant who cried out of frustration of not being able to analyse their group's field findings.¹⁰

The South Sulawesi local community's social institution system that generally produce hierarchical relations also contribute to limiting one's space for growth in an egalitarian environment free to voice

⁹ Social structure here is defined as relationship pattern and system of meaning of a group of community that has persisted for so long that they are regarded as the norm (see Hays .1994. "Structure and Agency and the Sticky Problem of Culture". *Sociological Theory*, Vol.2 (1), p. 65).

¹⁰ For further description and analysis of this program, see: Nurhady Sirimorok. 2010. *Membangun Kesadaran Kritis*. Yogyakarta: Insispress.

one's opinions. Along with memorizations in schools, this social system leads youth to rarely have discussions on public issues and deliver them to the public, at least to the nearest public. Public matters are usually dominated by adults. Therefore, they lack the space and relevant selection of tools to (practice) analyse everyday issues that they observe or experience. And so, it is no surprise that they lack vocabularies, strategies and expression tools required to clearly and acutely formulate opinions.

In essence, all of the weaknesses that the partners displayed above are none other caused by schools and communities who, from the very beginning, provided little space – either intentionally or unintentionally – to train the youth to think scientifically and express these opinions. These symptoms are evident not only in our partners. My experience conducting trainings and studies with youth groups for nearly two decades has seen similar symptoms in various organizations, from university organizations, extracurricular campus groups, NGOs, religious-based youth groups, and others. This view was confirmed by one study about rural youth in four districts in South Sulawesi. We found that the youth's place in society were no more than being bossed around or as implementers of policies designed by the adults. Even if they participate in collective work in public space with a relatively high decision-making level, it is usually only for recreative activities that youth are normally a part of, such as arts and sports.

If we add this social background to the specific issues of local CSOs as mentioned above, the lack of participation in 'contemplative' activities such as design and analysis, shows why VOICE is crucial for partner organizations in South Sulawesi.

The work that VOICE does, in my opinion, can potentially contribute to maintaining the longevity of partner organizations. One of which is by urging them to have comprehensive understanding of the issues in their work. Through research, partner organizations will always have something to do. Detailed knowledge will spark new ideas on the programs needed. Detailed knowledge, especially if coupled with relevant analysis tools and comparative studies by reading cases in other areas, will have an

effect on commitment. With this ‘software’, an organization will continue to think that there are things left unfinished, gaps or weaknesses in previous work – there’s always something wrong. In other words, through detailed and analytical knowledge, an organization will be able to be self-critical. This never-ending reiterative process of action-reflection-action – or praxis – will push an organization to continue what they’ve been doing in a better and more directed manner. Weaknesses will appear as challenges to be resolved, while strengths will be appreciated as capital to be maintained. In this manner, VOICE and other programs with similar approach, can provide a vital contribution to maintain the direction and existence of local organizations.

PANTORO TRI KUSWARDONO

East Nusa Tenggara Region

OBSUCRED BOUNDARIES

Self-reflection on CIPG-VOICE Partner Research Facilitation

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Lack of Familiarity is Hard

Researching a topic or assisting in research, especially as advisor, would be interesting if we begin with topic selection and formulation of research problem and question. In this process, all these are a luxury. I received the task of facilitating these novice researchers when their research proposals were nearly finished.

Similarly, for lawyers, doctors or teachers, it is critical to know the client profile. Although I knew both of the organizations that I facilitated, I didn't know their organization profiles. I had no information of their background, writing experience, field experience, and analysis experience, whether of the Amnaut Bife 'Kuan' Foundation (Yabiku) di North Central Timor or Wali Ati Foundation (Yasalti) di East Sumba. For a facilitator, client profile is vital. By understanding our client profiles, facilitators can formulate the right facilitation and consultation strategies.

I only received the profiles and characters of the researchers and studied them with Klara, a CIPG-VOICE facilitator for East Nusa Tenggara partners, when we began our facilitation work. It was then that we understood the majority of these researchers were beginners who were not doing deep dives into the topics they were about to embark. They were not the staff tasked on these issues. They knew about the issues, but only superficially. Their everyday work was different from the proposed research topics. Yabiku's research focused on increasing violence against women in North Central Timor District, while Yasalti decided to focus on the aspirations of youth weavers for the option of a better future in East Sumba District. On the other hand, the team members from both organisations worked on agriculture development and youth economy, two topics quite distinct from their everyday work.

Emotions and Feelings Can Trigger Questions

The first meeting was difficult for me because the partners did not understand the issues they were about to research. During the research planning consultation process, our Yasalti colleagues looked confused when formulating their research question. Normally I'd ask, "What puzzles you or makes you ask questions when you see certain situations?" Or to put it in another way, "What social situations concerns you as civil societies?"

I began my facilitation work through these questions to see if their concerns were rightly placed. Concerns, curiosities, or anger toward certain conditions can usually trigger an investigation. Unfortunately, these initial motivation-triggering emotions were not clearly evident in the partners discussions. We needed quite some time to dig into their understanding and facts until they were able to formulate their problem and propose the right research questions.

Without Facts, They're Just Venting or Gossip

Preliminary data and facts are key in research. Concerns, anger and curiosity can only become a research topic if balanced and supported by a number of the correct facts and logical frameworks. Herein lies the challenge. Both researchers did not have or were not aware of the wealth of information and knowledge that their organizations possess. Many of our questions remained unanswered because their limited exploratory abilities were limited to certain programs in their organisations. It may have been that their organisations' cultures were not well conducive for their staff to explore and collection existing information or knowledge.

Interestingly, new data and facts were obtained when the process was ongoing. For example, most community members in Lairuru Village, Yasalti's research site, practice the Marapu religion, which we only learned of halfway in during my first visit to East Sumba. This was clearly missing from the research design because the partner failed to comprehensively explain the context of the research site. Lack of reliable data in North Central Timor District only came to light more than a month into the study. Meanwhile the method designed assumed comprehensive chronological data for more than a dozen cases. With this information, clearly the research design would have been different.

Framework is a Compass to Stay on Track

It is a prerequisite for researchers to have the critical or theoretical frameworks to be applied, contested, or completed. Critical or theoretical framework pose the next stumbling block in this process. The partner teams did not equip themselves with certain critical frameworks to use, prove or argued in this study. This in itself was a challenge. Like it or not, as consultants and facilitators, we had to help them develop their critical frameworks.

To help with their critical frameworks, Klara and I had to think hard to find ways for our partners to be able to understand the data and information they need to answer their research questions. During the first meeting in Kupang on March 2018, because the partners could not seem to develop their critical frameworks, we tried to have them review incidents of violence through a progression of disaster viewpoint. An incident involving violence is analysed based on six factors: vulnerability, triggers, acts of violence, impacts, resolutions and justice for survivors. These six factors would act as the main blades for Yabiku to dissect domestic violence cases in their 2015-2017 data.

Having good grasp of critical framework doesn't end there. This hurdle was often met during data collection. Whether we liked it or not, critical framework strengthening could only be done long-distance.

If We Don't Talk, How Can We Help?

For some, remote consultation through email, phones or gadgets can add or strengthen their knowledge. But for some people, these methods are not appropriate. Some require face-to-face meetings and direct tutorials to understand certain concepts. It seemed that the partners were this type. There is nothing wrong with this, only that distance and means of communication were limiting factors.

Remote discussions and facilitation through email and especially WhatsApp require certain cleverness. Especially if certain people were likely to post numerous texts and ask tons of questions. The screen is small, and so is the virtual keyboard. It is not easy to have a virtual discussion.

Although WhatsApp has its web app, the partners were unaware of this facility. And I only learned about this during my first visit

to Yasalti in East Sumba on June 2018. They seemed surprised when I showed them the web WhatsApp discussion process with Klara. Therefore, the consultation scope expanded from not only research, but also teaching them how to use Web WhatsApp.

Other technical matters, in addition to coordination, posed a challenge for the partners. They were only able to type with their software but unable to optimize the facilities to ease analysis and writing. In Word, partners did not know how to use style, footnote, and automatic content generator. They also had difficulties copying from word processing to table processing (spreadsheets such as Excel). Oftentimes I had to give them remote tutorial on how optimum use of Office.

I initially intended to teach them citation software such as Zotero or Mendeley, and basic coding to process tables. But I decided against that after seeing the partners' abilities to use word processing software was still very limited. In addition to that, additional software plug-ins would only add to their burden.

How Can You Find Anything if You Don't Look Closely?

The critical framework we helped formulate in Kupang on March 2018 turned out to be insufficient. Yabiku had a hard time or was not meticulous enough in observing that the interconnected factors affecting violence were complex and linked from the scope of family to the state. Not long after, a brief interpretation on Naila Kabeer's social relations framework was released, which can help case dissection and interview guidelines.

In another area, Yasalti was facing a different but equally challenging problem. In conducting its study, Yasalti did an ethnographic approach, in which the researcher had to spend days observing their subject's activities. However, it turned out that the research team did not have a full grasp on the ethnographic approach. Or it may have been because of workload from other programs, the researchers were unable to implement the method correctly.

Disciplined in Your Discipline

The number of tools we provided as consultants and facilitators were not strictly used. Field findings were poorly reported, without transcripts of interviews that were critical for data

analysis. The research team failed to write a field journal which would have helped us understand how the study was done and be able to provide inputs if there were any stumbling blocks. Lack of written findings led me dig for information directly from the research team.

During my first visit to Yasalti on June 2018, a number of facts came to light. Luckily the researchers wrote down in their notes the field findings and interview notes from various references in the study site. From this we guided the Yasalti research team to revise their findings report for analysis input in the report writing stage.

Another surprising fact was, as explained above, that the majority of Lairuru villagers are Marapu practitioners. Moreover, through other studies, Yasalti found facts of discrimination which would affect the research topic in this program. Unfortunately, this fact was not mentioned during the first discussion in Kupang. Had this fact been stated, the research question might have been different.

For Some People, Writing is No Easy Task

The adventure continues. This time during the report writing. As we learned, writing is not easy for some people. Maybe because for too long Indonesian schools have focused on multiple choices, therefore the ability to write is not a skill found equally in many. Clearly it was difficult for our partners in East Nusa Tenggara to write up their reports. Run-on, longwinded and repeated sentences, typos and wrong punctuation marks, and misplaced conjunctions and prefixes/suffixes were frequent mistakes in their report drafts.

These grammatical mistakes took much of our time. In addition to focusing on the substance, we also had to revise the chaotic grammar. In any case, a poorly written report will prevent the reader from easily understanding the research findings and messages.

State and Policies *Do* Exist, and They *Do* Have an Impact

The hard times aren't over yet. This time with regards to policy analysis. The VOICE program aims for on policy advocacy. Therefore, the research done in this program must include part of

policy analysis. This turned out to be another weak point in our partners. Even if there were no policy analysis, oftentimes research produced findings directed at certain aspects of the policy to advocate.

The partners did not understand that policy analysis aims simply to review consistency of government objectives, programs, activities, and indicators. That's the first. Secondly, policy analysis can also be linked with gap analysis between objectives, programs and activities with the realities or problems faced by public for which they serve. Even with these simple definitions, the partners didn't understand one of the objectives of advocacy is to intervene and close these gaps.

I practiced this short capacity building approach during the second face-to-face meeting in East Sumba. I provided a simple table useful to map policy and field condition gaps. Why did we use this? Because this was a field research to collect field data, and therefore policy analysis must be linked with the question asking whether policies are addressing challenges and issues on the ground.

That was in East Sumba. In North Central Timor, the challenges that arose in the report writing was the lack of researcher's discipline in the research framework. The researchers did not discuss the themes applied one by one to examine their cases. It seemed that the researchers were in a rush and only relied on their memory to write. Had the researchers been more discipline and discuss each of the themes to code, they would have obtained a deeper analysis. We fed Yabiku questions to help them formulate their research results in a more structured manner.

Learning Includes Reading

The explanation above reads like me venting out about facilitating beginner researchers. I understand that the facilitation process did not go as planned. The main challenge I faced was lack of researcher's discipline in conforming to the agreed process. Facilitation which could have been done in a more step by step manner couldn't be applied because the researchers were also working on other tasks which they failed to mention in the beginning. It took a long time to share the sheets of field notes and data worksheets for analysis to the facilitators and consultants, and this was done inconsistent with the guidance.

And to make things worse, the researchers who have already received their CREAME modules did not closely read the module, which in my opinion is brief and easy to read as a research guideline.

In the meetings or communications, we often had to repeat the information previously shared during the CREAME training. I don't know why, it seemed that the researchers didn't want to read the CREAME module. Whenever we mention what was already written in the CREAME module, the researchers could only smile sheepishly. The question is, what make them uninterested to re-read this concise, brief and simple module? A module that compressed an entire university semester course wasn't used as a guideline for developing proposal, methods, analysis, and report writing. In addition, the researchers never asked a question linked to the CREAME lessons.

Obscure Boundary between Facilitator and Researcher

It is difficult when the facilitated researchers position themselves merely as data collectors or enumerators, meanwhile the consultant must act as the primary researcher. This led to another question. Maybe the CSO research capacity development process is a step-wise process; from enumerator, research assistant, facilitating researcher, then primary researcher. Maybe this is the process to build CSO capacity to ring out evidence into advocacy material, not unlike the gradual growth of an academic researcher's career.

If anyone were to ask are there transformations that partners experienced thus far, of course there are. Even though these changes are not what we had hoped for. Maybe we set our expectations too high, meanwhile the partners were beginners in need of more intensive facilitation, starting by forming critical frameworks of the selected issues, then on to research method and report writing.

Report writing was the stage with the greatest improvement. At first the partners had more than one main topic within one sentence. They were also accustomed to writing extremely longwinded sentences. Our inputs made them understand how to create a well-written and readable article.

The partners' critical framework and methodological progress didn't improve as much as their writing techniques. This seems to be a common illness among local NGOs. Social analysis and basic participatory research techniques have not been taught to next generation NGOs. Most young post-2000 era activists dove headfirst into the field without having critical and in-depth reflective framework process. Therefore, it is not uncommon to see a lack of critical thinking or even too much assumptions, including in this program. Unfortunately, we were unable to provide critical and social analysis education in this process, which led to the slow progress of the critical and methodological framework.



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