

A Brief Report – INDONESIA (2006)
**The Role of institutions in the village of Toro in the fields of development
and conservation¹**

(= Appendix 2 of Final report of LAGSUS, Sociology module)

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For original BahasaIndonesia report & fax reply by village authorities see adjoined file

Research Focus:

- The relationship between institutions in the village of Toro
- The relationship between institutions and conservation
- The relationship between institutions and development

Research Methods:

- 1) Production of a video of the school children's drama about conservation issues, and a discussion with the chairperson of the *Lembaga Adat* (Customary Law Council)
- 2) Production of a map of the village, including the location of the residences of members of village institutions, chairmen and members of farmer's groups, and inquiring about the local words for conservation, sustainability, and good leadership.
- 3) Interviews with members of the village parliament and the members of the *Lembaga Adat* (Customary Law Council) concerning the three topics mentioned above, and including questions about good leadership and hopes for the future.

Research Results:

In general terms it can be said that the respondents feel that the relationship between the village institutions is only mediocre, whereas in the past it had already been good. According to the respondents, there are several issues which caused this change. These issues will be explained after the sketch of the role of the different institutions:

The role of the institutions in the village of Toro

- The role of the *Lembaga Adat* (Customary Law Council) is to guard adherence to the traditional regulations of customary law, and to follow up on cases of violation of these regulations by administering sanctions. These violations concern nature conservation, marriage relationships (including clandestine relationships), and quarrels.
- The role of the BPD (village parliament) is to represent the aspirations of the village people and to work together with the village government in the planning and implementation of policies, such as drafting *Perdes* (*Peraturan Desa = Village regulations*), and drafting development plans and the village budget.
 - The role of OPANT (*Organisasi Perempuan Adat Ngata Toro = Organisation of Adat Women in Toro Village*) is to strengthen the role of women in decision making processes (i.e. the empowerment of women) and to take over the role of PKK (as agreed on in the big [village] meeting of 2003)

BPD

The role of BPD which is considered most important is to carry the aspirations of ordinary village residents to the village governmental institutions and to cooperatively run programs to fulfil the needs of common people. Among the goals mentioned by members of the village

¹ This report was shared with the mayor of Toro and the chairperson of the women's organisation OPANT.

parliament are the drafting of village regulations (*Perdes*) and discussions concerning the program of a "Model Village." They also had made proposals for how the funds granted to Toro could be spent in order to increase the standard of living of ordinary citizens of Toro, as, for example, by creating a stock of fertilizer (to decrease dependence on the traders). The aims and usefulness of the purchase of audiovideo equipment and the training for its use was questioned. There was also the opinion that members of BPD felt sidelined in the making of decisions. This was because they felt that their proposals were not taken into account. One of the important issues which caused the feeling of disappointment had been the sentence "You don't need to know" when clarification about the use of funds given by outside organisations - in particular concerning the UNDP SGF-GEF grant - had been requested. According to BPD members, the village people in general feel disappointed because the said grant did not benefit them, while everybody knows about this grant following a meeting at the *Lobo* in 2004. According to several members of the village parliament, this disappointment is not the result of frustrated ambitions to take over the administration of those funds, but only the lack of clarity about the allocation of those funds.

Apart from the problems mentioned above, there are several specific issues, such as:

- 1) The role of OPANT within the set-up of village institutions
- 2) The use of the fund granted [by the National Park Authority] for the renovation of the *Lobo*
- 3) The building of a new *Bantaya* (assembly hall)
- 4) The status of ownership of the car which had formerly belonged to *pak Rolex*. About this issue there were two conflicting opinions:
 - a) The car had been borrowed for the purpose of the research of *pak Frank*.
 - b) The car had been bought with money from the grant.
- 5) The appointment of two members of village institutions to the village parliament who had not been elected by popular vote (as stipulated in the regional regulations of the year 2000)
- 6) The fact that not all *Kompensasi BBM* (Government payments to poor people to cover increased prices following the cancellation of the subsidy for local prices of oil and petrol) reached the target population. In other words, the *Kompensasi BBM* only benefits those close to the members of ruling village institutions.

OPANT

Almost all members of the village parliament and also of the *Lembaga Adat* expressed their lack of a clear understanding of the true role of OPANT, particularly in the face of a common understanding that OPANT had taken over the functions of PKK. The confusion arose because the activities formerly initiated or performed by PKK had been very clear, had followed the 10 basic programs of PKK and had been run with regional funds coming from *Bangdes*. The use of those funds had always been agreed upon by *musyawarah* and recorded by the treasurer in the official record book. According to the respondents, these practices are no longer followed, giving rise to disappointments because during the times of the functioning of PKK programs, they could benefit directly from such activities such as vegetable gardens, *arisan* (savings groups), *dasa wisma* cooperative groups, and others,

The building of a new *Bantaya* (=assembly hall) - although it was acknowledged that whoever had the means to build one, was entitled to do so by *adat* - gave rise to the fear the function of the *lobo* as the most revered - or sacred - meeting place of the village might get lost. Apart from this, the suspicion surfaced that the building of the *Bantaya* was (partially) financed through the grants coming from outside the village. Because of this, the status of the ongoing construction work is very unclear to the common people. There are two opinions: one group believes the money used comes from the UNDP grant, while the other group believes that in reality the funds come from the renovations grant for the *lobo*.

Lembaga Adat

All the respondents expressed their conviction that the *Lembaga Adat* plays a very important role, foremost in the arranging and applying of forest conservation regulations. This is done through the application of sanctions to anyone who transgresses these regulations, such as with the felling of trees without a license of the *Kepala Desa* (=village head / mayor). For members of the *Lembaga Adat* the most important function was to preserve and keep alive the culture of Toro through applying sanctions whenever improper – i.e. clandestine - relationships between men and women occurred. This is important because it can protect people of Toro from natural disasters if the cleaning rituals were conducted with the blood of cattle submitted in payment of sanctions. However, there was also the opinion that the relationship between the village government and the *Lembaga Adat* was too close, giving rise to the feeling that members of other institutions, particularly the BPD, experience difficulties of communicating with the village government. The existence of that feeling also has to do with the lack of clarity concerning the financial matters of Toro, reaching a point where attitudes of unwillingness to remain loyal to forest conservation rules begin to appear. The weakness of existing prohibitions is exacerbated by the laxness of the *Tondo Ngata* in following their duties. This, in turn, has to do with the lack of attention paid to their welfare in the form of the lack of satisfactory daily remunerations for their efforts. Another important matter which urgently needs to be solved by the *Lembaga Adat* – the institution which is thought to possess the most accurate knowledge about the history of ownership of pieces of land – is the clarification of the ownership status of land, particularly for migrants. This should avoid the marginalisation of migrants following the reclaiming of land by indigenous inhabitants. Whereas the ownership of these pieces of land originally had come about because the village government had alienated vacant plots to people who did not yet possess land.

Conclusion

All the matters explained above condense the various opinions forwarded in response to explaining the aim and topic of this research to our respondents – following the model given at the beginning of this report – at the beginning of all our interviews.

In brief, it appears that the disbursement of grants to the village of Toro has led to feelings of disappointment not only among common village folks, but also for members of village institutions in Toro, because of the lack of transparency concerning the use of these grants. This state of affairs might develop into a threat to the trust of the people in the village government which in fact is still considered to be good. According to the opinions forwarded during this research, however, the disappointment referred to is already felt by the majority of the population. Despite this, however, the hope is strong, that in the future the unity and mutual agreement which had existed before the disbursement of the several grants mentioned, can be revived. With it, it is hoped, the four principles agreed on by all institutions in the *Musbang* (village *musyawarah*) as guiding their actions, can be revived:

- 1) Democratic: all matters are decided upon together
- 2) Participatory: all matters are worked upon together
- 3) Transparent: all matters are known together
- 4) Accountable: all components carry the responsibility together (alternative translation: are accountable to each other)

In the researchers opinion, this corresponds very closely to the image of good leadership which one of the interviewed members of the *Lembaga Adat* gave: according to tradition, a good leader “serves his people with honesty.” At the very least, people hope for two matters concerning such good leadership: first; there has to be openness; second; *musyawarah* should

always be adhered to. Therefore, the majority of our respondents, both male and female, very much hope for another big musyawarah along the lines of the *Musbang/Musrenbang* which had been held several years ago. In this meeting, all the matters mentioned in this report could be clarified. According to the respondents' explanation, this constitutes a good way towards a better future – a way which can reunite the people, the institutions, and the government of *Nata Toro*.

