



SUCCESSFUL FAMILY FARMING CASE-INDONESIA

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Agriculture for Small Farmer

Background

Indonesia known as an agrarian country with rich of natural resources (biodiversity). However, the rural people that mostly living in agriculture sector likewise living under the poverty line. For Indonesia, agriculture as a source of life for more than 45 million people (49,68 %) from 91,65 million people working in agriculture sector with around 38,2 % women. More than 17 million people (around 87%) small holder farmer families producing food. In the sixty years since Indonesia's independence, the agricultural sector is known as the "primadonna", or a leading sector in the economy which contributed to nearly 70 percent of GNP and job creation.¹ In addition to food security, the agricultural sector contributes to the broader macro-economy, including to the GDP, job creation, provision of industrial materials, and influx of foreign exchange. At the time of the economic crisis, the agricultural sector served as a buffer, such that the national economy did not experience a greater collapse than it did. However, the lack of a long-term vision for national economic development has weakened agriculture and limiting its role in the national economy.

Through the implementation of Green Revolution which relies on agriculture inputs industry has been marginalizing the small farmers and women. Their knowledge, experiences and skills in agriculture have been neglecting replaced by agriculture industry. In addition, green revolution has worsening the imbalance in land ownership.

Objectives of the program

- Strengthening the capacity of small farmers men and women in agriculture using locally available agriculture resources
- to address the dependency of small farmers to external and highly chemical inputs that have caused the loss of their experience, knowledge and culture as well as deteriorating natural resources
- to empower household economy of small farmers

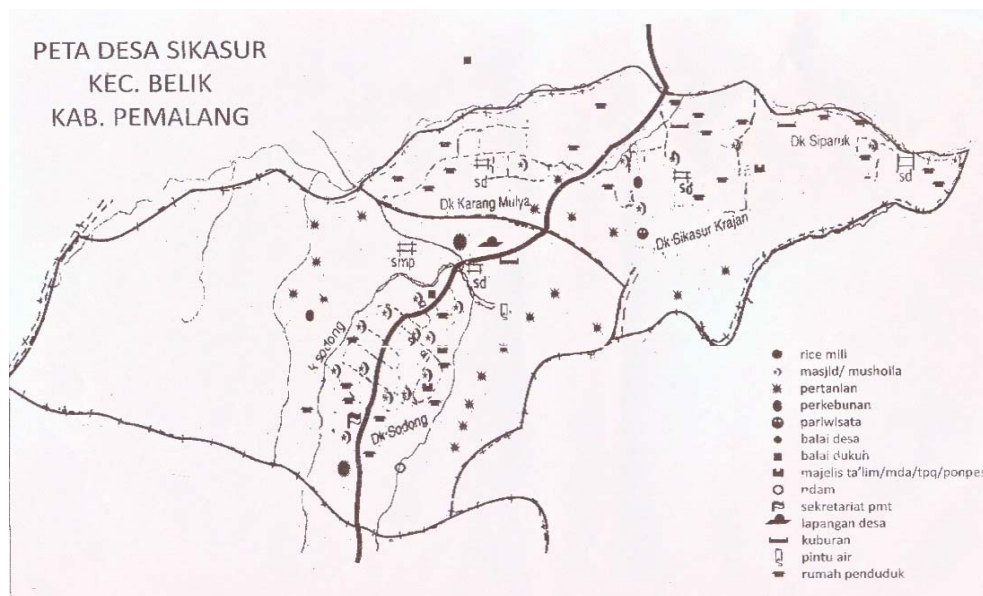
¹ Sri Hartati Samhadi, "Sektor Pertanian Dianaktirikan," in Special Report 60 Years of Indonesia Independence, *Kompas* daily, 16 August 2005, p. 50.

Main implementers

Family of Mr.Yasim and Mrs.Chozah, Paguyuban Mekar Tani (PMT), CO (Community Organizer), TA (Technical Assistant for sustainable agriculture), FO (Field Officer) and Bina Desa staff.

Location

Village of Sodong-Sikasur, Sub District of Belik, District of Pemalang, Central Java.



Village of Sodong, Sikasur located within Belik sub District, District of Pemalang, Central Java. Total population is about 11.229 (5.799 women and 5.430 men) with 2.314 head of household. Most of the inhabitant (4.492 is living as small farmers which average own small piece of land less than 1 hectare while 3.635 people own land more than 1 hectare. The rest is working as small trader, labor industry and government employee.

Condition before the project started

- Chemical input is the main input in agriculture.
- Certain seeds known as superior seeds produced by seed industries such as ciherang, fatmawati, IR etc and hybrid vegetables seed are the only seed available in the village.
- Women dealing with domestic work as there is no places for women to work in agriculture
- Children Education level; elementary to secondary school
- Selling vegetables to middlemen done individually or direct to the market. This was led to competition of price among small farmers.



Main project activities and management structures

There are main activities in the project are in the following;

1. Integration with the community by a Community Organizer (CO); This process is basically to build a close relationship between CO and the community as a relation among subject while the object is problem faced by the community. Once the CO has been accepted by the community as their friend, dialogue could be developed easier; on individual or household level as well as common problem within the community.

From the dialogues, came into agreement to establish a community group named Paguyuban Mekar Tani (PMT). The establishment was based on the need to face challenges together as they learned from experiences that working individually does not give significant impact.

The role of CO is to facilitate capacity building of the PMT through various training related to rising critical awareness, solidarity and strengthen their self confidence.

2. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)
Once the CO has been accepted and the people's organization (or community group) has been established, the process is continue by doing Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) as a process of learning together between CO and the community on locally available socio, economic, politic, culture and natural resources that could be managed to sustain their life in a more dignified way.
Main results of PRA are among others;
 - a. Strengthening their organization especially on strengthening its member on the importance to be united in their organization
 - b. Natural Farming (NF) development to reduce cost of production, natural conservation and release their dependency to agriculture industry
 - c. Develop Home industry

Result of PRA becomes a basis for community and CO's plan of action. First of all, training on strengthening the organization should be done before other trainings. This is aimed to strengthen the community to work collectively.

3. Training on Natural Farming (NF)
While strengthening the PMT is being implemented through various activities facilitated by CO, PMT sent its 4 (four) representatives to a natural farming training held by Bina Desa in Banjarnegara, Central Java in 2006 facilitated by the TA (Technical Assistant for Natural Farming). Among the four, there is Yasim attending the training. After Yasim returned to his village in Sodong, Sikasur, Pemalang, Central Java, he shared his knowledge and skills from the training to Mrs.Chozah, his wife, and his family as well as to other PMT members.



The training also discussed on how to make use of small plot of land to plant vegetables and other purposes such as fish pond, chicken or goat breeding.

4. NF Development

In 2007 Yasim and his family started to change from conventional agriculture to natural farming technology in their 5035 meter square (0,5 hectare) of paddy land.

First they found a local paddy variety from farmers in Banjarnegara and they plant it in their paddy land. At the beginning they were anxious on the yield especially Mrs.Chozah as she was considering if the trial would fail then it means their family does not have food to eat. Besides, she also think about pesticide and other chemical inputs which she usually just buys to exterminate insect or other predators, need not to make any natural pesticide by her. The PMT members have also been waiting what will the result of NF; some responded cynically while the others just kept quiet.

In this situation, the CO convinced Mr.Yasim and his family that what they have started by practicing NF will give a new experience.

This condition is challenging Mr.Yasim to continue practicing NF. He considered as an education media for his family and the PMT members; he believes that a long time ago, his parent had also practicing agriculture without chemical inputs which called *orthodox agriculture*. Therefore, he does not find any difficulties in practicing NF since he just recalled as what his parent did in the past.

5. NF Coordination Meeting and Reflection

As part of capacity building, TA, FO and CO held a coordination meeting at provincial level every 3 months. This meeting is aimed to share experiences working collectively in a group, identifying the gap, progress on NF implementation as well as efforts need to be done for improvement. Mr.Yasim and Mrs.Chozah always attending the NF coordination meeting. These meetings convinced Mr.Yasim and Mrs.Chozah that they should continue what they have been starting. They got confidence to implement NF using their knowledge and experiences. NF is not an investment of capital but an investment of life.

Aside of practicing NF in paddy land, as well Yasim and family has implemented farming in small plot of land; they plant vegetables and cassava a long dike between rice field which they could sell once the family need has fulfilled. They collect the money from selling vegetables and the difference from cost of production to start goat breeding which also using NF technology and fish pond. They used the dung from goat breeding to make fish woof.



Main results

Through this program, there are main results related to small farmer's empowerment;

- a. The growing of self confidence as small farmers—in this case Mr. Yasim, Mrs. Chozah with two of their children.
- b. Reducing cost of production significantly
Cost of production reduced significantly. This can be calculated below;
 - Using chemical input:
For their 5035 meter square the cost needed is Rp.2,000,000 (USD 215) to by fertilizer , pesticide and other inputs for one season. The yield is 3500 Kg.
 - Using NF;
They need Rp.150,000 (USD 16,1) with the details;
Bran 200 Kg @ Rp 350/kg = Rp 70,000
Nutrition/pesticide/fungicide= Rp 80,000, with the yield is 2000 Kg.
The nutrition which its cost Rp 80,000 can also be used to the following seasons (second and third season). In the second and third season, they only bought 15 Kg of ban which equivalent with Rp 5, 250.
Note : USD 1 = Rp. 9,300
- c. Experiencing the benefit of practicing NF; by using local seed variety and locally available resources, not only economically profitable but also taking care the health of family and nature.
- d. Safe from rats attacks; when rice field in the village attacked by rats, rice field of Yasim family was secured due to local paddy variety (*Pandan Wangi*) has a hard stalk.
- e. Learning from Yasim family the number of farmers implementing NF has increased. In addition, they do not sell grain any longer; they sell rice in order to get more profit through their organization PMT.
- f. NF development has reduced the number of youth to find job in the cities as factory worker

Facilitating factors

- Introduction of NF once the people's organization has been established. Not only technically on NF but also its values
- Using family approach in all the activities
- Willingness and open minded of Yasim and Chozah helped a lot in developing NF in Sikasur.
- Women actively involved in NF as the material for making nutrition and pesticide are familiar with women's daily life
- The availability of CO and TA
- Bottom up process, based on the farmers need



Hindering factors and how these were overcome

- Pragmatically thinking of small farmers caused by the green revolution has caused reluctant to make agriculture inputs by themselves. As well, they would see the result first before going into practice.
- Agriculture extension worker in the village which selling chemical inputs often time tempt the farmers to return to conventional agriculture as well as middlemen which approaching PMT member individually.

To overcome those hindering factors done through genuine participatory processes; the CO takes those phenomenon as object for discussion with the community, to analyze its impact to their life and nature and to find solution together.

Lessons learned (especially for replication purposes)

- Community organizing process is dialogues to strengthen self confidence and critical awareness on what's going on in the community, its cause and impact to the community and nature as well as the need to unite. Through this process, awareness of the community is rising on the need to be self reliance and release their dependency to other parties. Once the farmers fully aware on the condition, they would fastly find out its alternatives through working collectively
- Need an effective team work; CO, FO and TA
- Avoid to talk about money at the beginning; what they need basically is to change the way of thinking

Note:

Bina Desa which founded in 1975 beliefs that one fundamental actions to achieve sustainable development is human development in order to be able to manage natural resources in a sustainable way. Knowledge, experiences and skills of small farmers men and women in agriculture are the key factors to further develop agriculture.