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Communication Role in Developing Collaboration to Build Ecovillage at Citarum's Upstream Watershed in Bandung Regency

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Upstream Citarum watershed environment is currently in a poor condition due to occurred environmental contamination, which threatened the state of environmental health. One of the way of dealing with the problem is through the development of ecovillage, which purpose is to return the condition of Citarum river into a clean, healthy, beautiful, and sustainable state (Bestari). Citarum Bestari can be materialized with the help of people by increasing their awareness on environmental preservation. One of the awareness needed is for the people lived on the river banks to avoid throwing their garbage to the river. A trust based collaboration among decision maker, and ecovillage activists is needed in developing ecovillage. The collaboration needed as previously there were no coordinated action and technical supervision from associated institution, which created a separated act by activists. One of the important factors in creating a collaboration is communication, the use of communication media in the form of discussion forum supported by social media such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook for m-learning purposes. Communication enables a like-minded understanding, avoiding tragedy of common, and more opportunities to collaborate and interact informally among ecovillage activists at Citarum river watershed.

Keywords: *collaboration, communication, ecovillage, activist*

1. Introduction

Citarum river watershed (DAS Citarum), has a high level of environmental damage. The damage is caused by pollution coming from industrial, office, farming, and household waste, which affected the water quality and threatening the environmental health. Ecovillage is tackling the environmental pollution at DAS Citarum, which according to Head of BPLHD (Badan Pengelolaan Lingkungan Hidup Daerah or Regional Body of Environmental Management) Anang Sudarna "one of the ecovillage's working network program is a massive peaceful movement against waste by campaigning it on factories involved".

The purpose of DAS Citarum's ecovillage development is to embody DAS Citarum as a clean, healthy, beautiful, and sustainable environment (or in acronym known as Bestari). Citarum Bestari would be possible if people awareness on environmental preservation can be increased. One of the awareness needed is for the people lived on the river banks to avoid throwing their garbage to the river.

Sudarna added that "The implementation of ecovillage has a purpose to reduce the volumes of garbage thrown at Citarum river. The volume of garbage thrown down Citarum river reaches more than 500,000 ton, or around 15 ton in each village. Ecovillage then become a leading program to reduce volume of garbage as one of indicator of successful outcome of Citarum Bestari".

Ecovillage development is based on community activities, by involving stakeholders such as villagers, business practises, religious leaders, non-governmental organization, government staffs and others to build an environmental friendly culture and behaviour, which also will increase the quality of environmental health. In materializing ecovillage at DAS Citarum, the communication collaboration is needed among decision makers, facilitator, volunteers, and general public. The purpose of this research is to explore: Firstly, the background of the need to collaborate among ecovillage activists; Secondly, communication/information media used in the development of ecovillage; Third, communication act of ecovillage activists in the development of ecovillage.

2. Literature Review

Collaboration is a communal act done by various parties to reach common objectives in solving a particular problem. Collaboration can only be done if there is an agreement and common understanding among individuals. The same can be said on the collaboration in tackling Citarum's flood disaster. This collaboration is done through common agreement in tackling the flood disaster by appropriately put the capacity and capability of individuals in common understanding on how the flood can be confronted not only in a physical aspect but also in human aspect as well.

According to Tajuddin (Badan Diklat DIY, 2014), collaboration is a relation between organization, governments, strategic alliance, multi organizations network. Other definition includes, togetherness, working together, sharing task, equality, and responsibility among parties involved, which have common goals, perception, willingness to proceed, giving each other benefit, honesty, love, and public based.

Collaboration needed social capital, which Yacobs suggested in bap bulletin (2005) as a trust relationship between parties supported collective act and facilitate access on every resources needed. Social capital is a social institution involving network, norm, and social trust encourages social collaboration (coordination and cooperation) for common interest (bap bulletin, 2005).

Communication aspect is one of the things that need to be consider as Huxman Vangen in Raharja (2010) suggests that communication is needed in to grow the same understanding and to avoid tragedy of commons. Communication is turning out to be important in building collaboration as participants have different frame of reference and field of experience that needed to be incorporated into one frame, which served the purpose of communication in term of change, knowledge, attitude, and behaviour of communication participants. Harjana in Rokhmah & Anggorowati (2107:67) added that effective communication can be reached if the message is received and understood as the sender of the information intended to be, which followed by an act by message receiver without any obstacle.

3. Research Method

This research uses descriptive method with qualitative data to describe phenomenon of collaboration in the development of ecovillage in DAS Citarum in Bandung Regency. Data gathering technique involves: Firstly, deep interview to gain data on communication process in building collaboration in the development of ecovillage; secondly, systematic and participatory observation in communication process; thirdly, document/library study connected to collaboration and communication concept.

The research data source includes informant from ecovillage facilitators collaborating with government institution, volunteers, and general public in the development of ecovillage. Data validity is done through triangulation of sources, data, and method. Data analysis is done through some steps: First, data reduction, which is done by reducing all observation and interviews data, followed by classification of main data and how important it is for the research divided under the same theme or pattern for easier process; Second, data display, by displaying data in table and picture form to give a general picture or particular parts in environmental health communication collaboration, which can be verified by researcher; Third, conclusion and verification, in explaining the motives, understanding, and act of communication in environmental health collaboration that is done through investigation on pattern, theme, correlation, and frequent occurred things, which is verified throughout the ongoing research.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Background on the need of collaboration among ecovillage activists

Ecovillage is a public based activities where environmental management involving stakeholders (public, business practises, religious figure, non-government organization, government staffs), which purpose is to develop environmental friendly culture and behaviour.

The development of ecovillage needed to have a collaboration among stakeholders, which occurred as the lack of coordination among them causing trouble in the implementation. Kaja (2014:213) confirmed this "work coordination is a synchronized and organized in providing the exact work and time while steering it into a uniformed and harmonious act on objectives established in the beginning.

Other reason is the lack of technical supervision in supplying knowledge and skill for ecovillage activists, which force them to adapt and improvise in creating innovation for ecovillage management.



Coordination and technical supervision from related institution become important as form of cooperation and responsibility, interaction, sharing, and solution for ecovillage activists. The developed collaboration among ecovillage activists come from common commitment based on trust to build appropriate ecovillage according to each village characteristic.

4.2. Communication/Information media used in ecovillage development

Communication/information media used in ecovillage development of DAS Citarum implemented in the form of Jangkar Forum (Jaringan kerja Forum or working network forum), and social media (WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook). Jangkar Forum is used by ecovillage activists to have discussions once a week for two months. This forum creates interaction and communication to share ideas and to create common understanding and perception, willingness to process, giving benefits to each other, honesty, love and public based; as per suggestion by Badan Diklat DIY in explaining collaboration.

Discussion material is adjusted according to the condition and potential of villages where ecovillage program taken place. The forum discusses village's potential and problem, which resulted in action plan for each village, ideally this will be delivered to appropriate institution to be spread.

To expand the knowledge of activists, the use of social media become important as it is much simpler and more flexible. The use of social media is part of the m-learning (mobile learning) in spreading information on ecovillage development. Waer (2012) suggest that m-learning enables more opportunities to collaborate ad hoc and interact informally among learning individual.

5. Conclusion

Collaboration in ecovillage development in DAS Citarum Bandung Regency is a relation among activists including: local aide, village government, and related institution, to have interaction and communication together in sharing ideas to have a common perception on ecovillage development.

Collaboration is caused by the need of more coordination due to lack of communication, lack of technical supervision from related institutions. Collaboration is developed through communication with respect on different frame of reference and field of experience of ecovillage activists to create a common understanding. Communication media used in this collaboration includes: Jangkar Forum for discussion, and social media (WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook) as part of m-learning. This media able to make better understanding and more opportunities on collaboration and interaction among ecovillage activists.

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