



The Role of Indonesian Rural Skills Development in Empowering Organic Farming Communities

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to find out how Indonesian Rural Skills Development helps organic farming communities in Kebun Kelapa Village, Secanggang District, Langkat Regency become more empowered. Descriptive and qualitative examination methods used in this exploration were used. Observation, question and answer, and documentation are techniques used in this exploration in order to obtain data. The validity of information in this examination uses triangulation of information that utilizes information inquiry, precisely data reduction (data reduction), data presentation (data display), conclusion drawing (conclusion drawing). Where this method helps in examining the problems that occur in the role of rural skills development in empowering farming communities. That way researchers can find out the role of the Indonesian Rural Skills Development in empowering organic farming communities, namely as a facilitator and dynamizer by conducting training and coaching and building a wider network in empowerment. And organic farming management makes farmers know and be able to make compost and plant it organically. The benefits felt by farmer groups are in terms of economy, health, and the environment as well as the community as a whole and maximize the use of natural resources and human resources.

Introduction

Community empowerment is an effort to liberate society so that it can take an effective part in all fields of progress. Community empowerment is also a responsibility to build an empowered society and have the strength, power, and ability to form an independent society. Autonomy does not mean having the choice to live alone, but being independent in making decisions, daring to choose and refuse assistance or cooperation that is not beneficial to oneself. One way to increase the capacity of the agricultural sector is to strengthen farmers who are organized into peasant groups. Coaching, training, and mentoring can be used to empower farmers to increase cooperation and livelihood capacity. (Nurdin et al., 2014) (Laksono & Rohmah, 2019) (Hamid, 2018)

To increase the capacity of the community, empowerment is also a process that takes time and real action from time to time. Therefore, the expansion of the organic farming community in Kebun Kelapa Village must participate in the activities carried out by the Indonesian Rural Skills Development (BITRA), because the farming community knows how the condition of their village is. Villages are also low government units, with community empowerment whose government implementation is directly related to daily community activities, the role of villages in development has a very important meaning. (Kusmana & Garis, 2019) (Indrianti et al., 2019)

In this exploration, farmers in coconut plantation villages have never conducted organic farming training, they still use non-organic. The development of organic agriculture carried out in Kebun Kelapa Village has not been fully focused on the ability of natural resources and human resources, especially farmers. There are still many members of farmer groups in Kebun Kelapa Kelapa Village who lack knowledge, ability, and capacity in implementing and managing organic farming. The farmer group did not run according to plan because farmers did not know. This is because farmers lack training, coaching, or advice on how to use organic farming. Therefore, the Indonesian Rural Skills Development visited coconut plantation villages to empower farmer groups in conducting organic farming training. (Hamid, 2018) (Raintung et al., 2021)

The role of Indonesian Rural Skills Development (BITRA) is as a facilitator and dynamizer in empowering organic farming communities, The main purpose of this policy is to improve human development and natural resources. One of them is the start of an empowerment program for organic farmers with various activities for agricultural development. Indonesian Rural Skills Development since 1986. The empowerment carried out is training, coaching, practice to carry out activities organically such as seminars, making compost, training and coaching to plant vegetables using compost.

Empowerment in this activity gives a positive impression to the farming community, before the arrival of the Indonesian Rural Skills Development in the Coconut Garden, they did not know the benefits of natural resources and humans in the village, because they did not know how to process and use the skills in the village. After knowing this, the community knows the benefits of managing agriculture not only non-organic but they can also do it organically.

The role of Indonesian Rural Skills Development is urgently needed in empowering organic farming communities, therefore the empowerment of organic farming communities must be long-term or sustainable, not just a short-term solution to the problems of helpless communities but also must develop the strengths they already have so that they can be independent.

The issue of empowering farming communities is often a topic of discussion, but there is a difference between the current and previous explorations, namely "The Role of the Toba Regency Government in Empowering Coffee Farming Communities in Lumbanjulu Village, Lumbanjulu District, Toba Regency" by Arifin Sihombing, Renaldi Halomoan Silalahi, and Simto FR Tampubolon 2021 concluded that the Toba Regency government has not seen what is really needed by coffee farmers and is more focused on The provision of coffee seeds in the upstream sector through this. What is different from the previous study with this exploration is the pretense of public authorities in involving natural cultivation networks, the pretense of farmer associations, to be more specific through Provincial Capacity Improvement throughout Indonesia. The findings of a study conducted by Asep Bambang Iryana in 2018 entitled "Empowerment of Farmer Communities in Improving Welfare in Comprong District, Subang Regency" show that the independence or independence of farmers in managing agricultural land and in a sustainable manner must be in accordance with the government's expectations for its participation in the empowerment process. The difference in this study is the role of Indonesian Rural Skills Development in empowering farmer groups as facilitators and dynamists in the training and coaching activities carried out.

Methodology

The author conducts qualitative research using descriptive techniques. This exploration was carried out at the BITRA Indonesia Office. By Pass No. Jl. Selamat 11 RW. 35, Sudirejo I in Medan District, Medan City, and Coconut Grove Village in Secanggang District, Lalat Regency. According to , this study uses (Mekarisce, 2020) *human interest instruments*,

meaning that the researcher conducts his own research and must have extensive theoretical knowledge in order to better understand, analyze, photograph, and construct the social situation being studied. (Fadli, 2021)

The sources of information for this examination are broken down into two things, namely: 1. Farmer groups, development of Indonesian rural skills, primary data. 2. Optional information, i.e. information that has been organized and placed into an archive type of ability to complete information exploration. Observation, question and answer, and documentation are techniques needed in collecting research information. Observation was carried out by observing the cycle of empowerment of organic farmers in Coconut Plantation Village. Rather, questions and answers are carried out according to guidelines that have been set in a structured manner. According to the direction of the parties directly involved in the field, interviews were conducted with the selected informants through the Deputy Director of BITRA Indonesia, the Manager of the Community Development and Environment Division, and the farmer group as many as 2 people. (Fiantika et al., 2022)

For information legitimacy, this examination uses information triangulation investigation, where triangulation is a strategy used to expand the legitimacy and dependence of information by utilizing several different sources of information, techniques or viewpoints. The goal is to compare data obtained from different points of view to confirm the findings of the exploration. In order to analyze this, information from questions and answers, field notes, and other sources is analyzed so that the results are easily understood and shown to other individuals. After this examination, "There are three steps to process qualitative information, namely data reduction, data presentation, and making conclusions. (Pahleviannur, 2022)

The focus of this exploration is 1) describing the role of Bitra Indonesia in empowering organic farming communities, 2) managing the empowerment of organic farming communities, and 3) the benefits of empowering organic farming communities through empowerment.

Results and Discussion

The Role of Indonesian Rural Skills Development (BITRA Indonesia) in Empowering Organic Farming Communities

The role of Indonesian Rural Skills Development is a non-governmental organization that facilitates farmers in carrying out activity programs in several districts/cities of North Sumatra Province and Aceh Province. Including the Coconut Plantation Village, Secanggang District, Langkat Regency, has participated in the activity program. Indonesian Rural Skills Development is an activity to increase community empowerment in rural areas through empowerment education and training aimed at helping and developing natural resources and human resources both individually and in groups. (Suhastyo, 2017)

The purpose of community empowerment is to help people become independent and free themselves, especially from poverty, underdevelopment, inequality, and assistance. . In addition, the purpose of empowerment is to find long-term solutions that increase the independence of vulnerable communities Community empowerment is to strengthen communities, especially from poverty, underdevelopment, disparities and assistance, as well as to enable them to become self-reliant. Based on the Quran's point of view, there are several processes that can be implemented to help the results of regional strengthening programs, in particular (Pathony, 2020; Amri & Ferizko, 2020).

Continuous self-improvement, where they must be able to grow as individuals and strive to improve their lives and future. Organizing education and community growth, where knowledge and ability are one of the phases that drive the community's economy. Implementing and

advancing zakat and infaq, two interesting projects in lifting individuals out of poverty. Zakat managers who are capable and proficient should also understand the best efforts. Hoarding (also known as monopoly) and other economic practices that Islam prohibits are a threat to society and are not in line with Islamic teachings that prioritize justice (Sinambela, 2024).

There are two components of empowerment: cycle and focus, As a cycle, empowerment is a combination of movements that focus on strengthening or expanding the quality of groups that are not represented in the people's group. The quality of working together on an opportunity or having an avenue for the resources and services needed to power one's ability to live (for individuals, groups, and society as a whole) is referred to as this process. (Sihombing et al., 2022) (Purwantini, 2019)

One of the main policies of Bina Rural Skills Indonesia is the development of agriculture through the empowerment of organic farmers with several kinds of training, which has been in the Indonesian Rural Skills Development since 1986. Indonesian Rural Skills Development collaborates with village governments in carrying out activities to empower farmer communities to increase the capacity of good farmers through: education, training, counseling, consulting, development of marketing methods for agricultural products and equipment. In addition, the Indonesian Rural Skills Development provides more services and empowers individuals so that the community can participate in the advancement of their region. (Hamid, 2018)

The role of empowerment carried out in Kebun Kelapa Village is training carried out for the farming community, in addition to conducting training, Bitra also builds a network in the sub-district and local government to open a wider network in empowering the organic farming community. Empowerment also helps to gain authority to make decisions and choose the actions to take regarding oneself. This includes reducing the impact of limitations and social influences on performance. (Margayaningsih, 2018)

The empowerment of farmer groups itself is an effort to increase capacity and make farmers more independent in their development. To achieve this goal, incentives are needed so that farmers can increase their production.

The Role of Indonesia's Rural Skills Development as a Facilitator

Indonesia plays the role of a facilitator of Rural Skills Development in the development of natural and human resources as organic farmers and mentoring through training, education, and skill building. As a result, the research shows that BITRA Indonesia plays a role as a facilitator in empowering organic farming communities by accompanying them in empowerment activities. It is the responsibility of Rural Skills Development to guide, develop, and direct communities towards strong community independence and organization. In carrying out these obligations.

However, due to the lack of cooperation between the Indonesian Rural Skills Development and farmer groups in the implementation of existing activities, it has not been able to optimize farmer group empowerment activities. because the farmer group in Kebun Kelapa Village is too busy with its own affairs so that it cannot focus on giving more strength to the organic farmer group.

The task of the Provincial Capacity Improvement Office throughout Indonesia as a facilitator is so important to support development exercises in rural areas, the agency not only focuses on providing offices but also must focus on the existing framework considering the absence of a foundation, for example, manure greatly affects the course of the existing horticultural industry, because the problem of compost in Indonesia is an obstacle that is directly related to the needs

and maintenance of horticultural land, and also, Indonesia's Rural Skills Progress must also be able to make a consistent contribution to special and non-land fields. -Specific directives to farmer groups i.e. energize and engage farmer groups so that they can plan, build and manage their own offices and systems. reinforcement, and have the option to complete independently.

The Role of Indonesia's Rural Skills Development as a Dynamizer

The role as a Dynamiser of Indonesian Rural Skills Development has the capacity to provide direction and guidance and invite the community to expand the sensitivity of residents and always cooperate with all developments. Bina Kemahiran Rural Indonesia directs farmer groups to build networks to other villages that have been empowered by Bina Kemahiran Rural Indonesia in order to get wider information, as well as build networks in sub-districts and local governments such as hearings to expand organic farming networks and get attention from the government. The role played by Rural Skills Development also conducts bottom-up learning where farmers learn from specific things and continue to general things. For example, development planning led by the village government that includes all elements of individuals and village community associations. (Arif, 2020)

Then the obstacle that befell the residents in the farmer group training was the time of the farmer group which was very dense because the farmer group had to manage their work, and they could not focus on one activity only. The Indonesian Rural Skills Development is expected to overcome the obstacles seen by the farmer group and can provide inspiration to grow the potential of the farmer group as well as focus on development and counseling and training.

From the role of BITRA, the empowerment of organic farmer communities provides a role for the community to open up more opportunities and learn about the programs and activities carried out by Rural Skills Development.

Organic Agriculture Empowerment Management

Organic farming management involves using natural methods to maintain soil, control pests, and increase crop productivity without the use of synthetic chemicals, in order to maintain the balance of ecosystems and human health. From the results of empowerment research carried out in the Coconut Farm village from several Indonesian Rural Skills Development activities, one of which is growing vegetables organically, such as: mustard greens, kale, eggplant, spinach, corn, chili, and others. Therefore, the empowerment of organic farming communities in coconut plantation villages, one of which is farmers grow vegetables organically. (Endah, 2020)

Farmers grow vegetables organically starting by buying quality vegetable seeds. How to grow vegetables with the organic method involves cultivating the soil to become fertile and rich in nutrients. After the soil is loose and ready, vegetable seedlings are planted on the land. Organic vegetable care includes daily watering and fertilizing done according to the needs of the plant.

After two weeks of planting the vegetables, they can be harvested and sold, in this sale the farmers sell to the agent at a price that has been set by the agent, the results of the sale of the harvest are stored and used to buy seeds and make compost, the results are also distributed to farmer groups.

Furthermore, in growing organic vegetables, the fertilizer used must also be organic, the manufacture of fertilizer is also carried out by the farming community using cow, goat, and chicken manure. In the processing of organic fertilizer, the mixture of manure is put in molasses and EM-4 is dissolved in a loose container to flatten cow manure, then stirred if it is evenly distributed in the lid, after a week in permentation, it is processed again and stirred then closed again after ten days can be used as organic fertilizer.

Thus, organic agriculture management in planting organic vegetables using compost fertilizer makes farmers know how to manage organic farming. Initially, farmers did not know how to make compost, but with this empowerment, they were able to make their own compost and grow it organically. Before that, farmers still used pesticides whose properties were reliable, easy to apply, had a high success rate, were easy to obtain, and were easy to obtain. However, the use of pesticides on plants can cause buildup in plants and also soil, climate in general. (Sinambela, 2024)

The empowerment of organic farming communities in coconut plantation villages in its activities is: access to natural resources is an asset owned in Coconut Plantation Village, natural resources such as water, land, forests, and land bring economic and social benefits to the community. Organic farming needs to maintain and expand the health of soil, plants, animals, individuals, and nature as a whole. Natural cultivation is also an environmentally friendly or environmentally friendly cultivation action by seeking to reduce adverse impacts on the climate. Organic agriculture is an integrated agricultural system that encourages conventional organic agricultural production that can produce healthy and sustainable food. (Yuriansyah et al., 2020)

Before planting organically, what must be considered is the land that will be used in planting vegetables, after paying attention to agricultural land, the fertilizer used must also be considered such as compost fertilizer, the main ingredient is cow dung in Coconut Farm Village using cow dung. Cow or cow manure is part of the potential ingredients to make organic fertilizers. Increasing soil fertility, improving soil structure and properties, accelerating groundwater absorption, accelerating soil microbial training, accelerating harvest quality (taste, value, nutrition, and quantity of crops), providing nutrients and vitamins for plants, controlling plant growth and disease, and increasing soil nutrients are the advantages of compost (manure) for soil and plants (Sany, 2019). Every empowerment activity carried out does not all run smoothly, there are also obstacles in carrying out activities, such as the dry season of dry organic farmland so that it needs water, which is experienced by dry well water so that they have to use a water pump, from this obstacle makes farmer groups have to borrow the water pump and spend additional capital to use the water pump.

Benefits of Empowering Organic Farming Communities Through Empowerment

The benefits of empowering organic farming communities through various empowerment initiatives can bring a number of significant benefits, both for them as farmers and for the community as a whole. In 2020 the Indonesian Rural Skills Development came to coconut plantation villages, where the farming community did not yet have knowledge about how to manage organic farming. So the Indonesian Rural Skills Development as a facilitator and dynamizer role in building organic agriculture in coconut plantation villages with farmer groups in the village. At that time, the farming community had not used compost as fertilizer to increase soil fertility and improve the quality of agricultural products. Compost has an advantage: it improves the quality of wet soil so that it becomes light. This prevents the soil from loosening by increasing the compaction capacity of sandy soils. This increases the ability of the soil to bind water and soil nutrients. Improve drainage and air intake of the soil. There are whole nutrients even in minimal amounts (this total depends on the ingredients used to make the fertilizer). After participating in the empowerment program, farmer groups understood the usefulness of compost and began to use compost as the main means of fertilizing their crops. (Susanto et al., 2023)

The benefits felt by farmers are very fruitful, both in terms of economy and environment. Overall, organic farmers benefit from the wide and varied benefits of implementing organic

farming practices. These benefits not only contribute to the well-being of farmer groups but also support the health of the environment and society as a whole.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the discussion that the researcher explained above, conclusions can be drawn, namely: The role of Indonesian Rural Skills Development in empowering farming communities is by being a facilitator and dynamizer in carrying out activity programs carried out in coconut plantation villages, such as training and coaching carried out by Indonesian Rural Skills Development in empowering organic farming communities and building a wider network. Organic farming management in planting organic vegetables using compost fertilizer makes farmers know how to manage organic farming. With this empowerment, they are able to make their own compost and grow it organically. This empowerment provides benefits for farmer groups, both in terms of economy and environment. These benefits not only contribute to the welfare of farmer groups but also support the overall health of the environment and society and maximize the appropriate use of natural resources and human resources.

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