

Agroecotourism Development for Community Empowerment and Strengthening Social Capital in Pemo Village, Kelimutu Sub-District, Ende District, Indonesia

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was: (1) to describe the development of agroecotourism in the aspects of the mindset, norms and artifacts as elements of community empowerment; (2) to describe patterns or forms of social capital in the development of agroecotourism as a form of sustainable tourism. Elements of social capital that were considered were: the system of values, human resource competencies, social management, social organization, social structure, leadership, and good governance. Through descriptive analysis, observations and interviews several findings were obtained: a) community empowerment through the agroecotourism development has not been run optimally; b) low competence of human capital; c) initiatives are top-down; d) lack of social capital socialization resulted in the many missing value systems in the community; e) development of agroecotourism seems redundant because the strengthening of social capital is not yet a consideration for implementation. Elements of value system which are necessary for social capital for community empowerment are: a sense of love, trust, self-esteem, empathy, honesty, openness, mutual sharing, altruism, visionary, and rationality; while advancement in meeting the material needs of the people is the initiative from the community at the grassroots level, a continuous and planned socialization and commitment is required.

Keywords: agroecotourism, empowerment, social capital and rural communities

1. Introduction

Lake Kelimutu in Ende has three colors which are always changing instantaneously as the weather changes. These have made the Lake a tourist attraction receiving many foreign and domestic tourists, bringing in revenue to Ende Regency. As the service industry round the Lake grows so has the activities. The growth of agricultural activities round the Lake has slowly triggered the growth of another activity, that of agri tourism or agroecotourism. Pemo Village is a village round Lake Kelimutu, where a lot activities to develop agroecotourism as a sustainable tourism activity is going on albeit with challenges. Some of the changes include the fact that; there is little involvement of the community in the conservation of natural resources within Lake Kelimutu National Park, and the fact that most development activities in the area are still top down. The agricultural activities in Pemo village that attract interests of tourists are mainly horticultural and agroforestry. Agroecotourism in Pemo village as social capital strengthening-based community empowerment has been relevant and is considered to be very urgent.

Kostov and Lingrad (2001) argue that rural development in the future requires a new approach and social capital strengthening-based community empowerment is very essential. (Mubyarto, 2002). The purpose of this study is to formulate a model of social capital strengthening in the empowerment of rural communities so that the agroecotourism management can support sustainable rural development. The research objectives are: (1) to describe agroecotourism from the aspect of mindset, norms, artifact and conditions of social capital of Pemo village community; (2) to describe patterns or forms of social capital based on cultural values in the development of agroecotourism.

2. Conceptual Framework of The Study

The intimate relationship between social capital and agroecotourism management in Kelimutu region is depicted in Figure 1. The model of empowerment of farmer groups in the management of agroecotourism in Kelimutu region can be developed by using a framework as shown in Figure 1.

In general, the model of agroecotourism development in Indonesia which was made by the government has been more focused on providing physical assistance to farmers and piloting of physical activity in the field. Activities that are often performed are only limited to the improvement of the quality of human capital in the form of improvement of science and technology. Theoretically, the effort of community empowerment in the management of agroecotourism made by the government for the villagers underestimates the strengthening of local social capital.

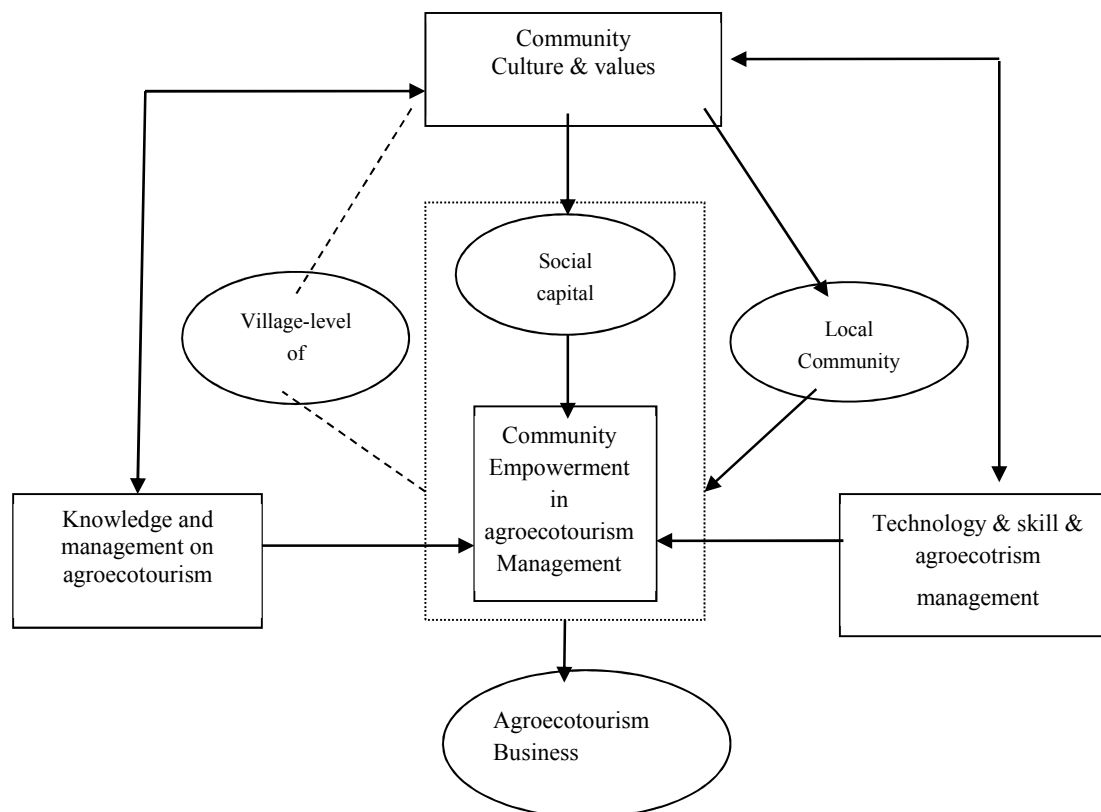


Figure 1. Model of the relationship between culture and value system, strengthening of social capital, and community empowerment in the management of agroecotourism in Kelimutu. Adapted from the thoughts of Odum (1971), Merton (1962), Altiery et al. (1997), Rambo (1982), Rachman (1996), and Lewis et al. (1997).

Management of agroecotourism indicated in Figure 1, shows agroecotourism as a passive object. The existence of agroecotourism in Kelimutu region should be integrated with the systems of life of local communities, or in other words agroecotourism management should include the empowerment aspect of local communities.

Community empowerment in the context of rural development is realized in the form of aid and physical knowledge to farmers only in the early stages of introduction. This kind of empowerment approach conducted on an ongoing basis by government officials not only will make farmers' participation become very shallow or shallow participation, (Malvicini and Sweetser, 2003) but will not have a positive effect on the strengthening of social capital for farmers and the local community.

Figure 2 shows that the agroecotourism management which emphasizes production approaches, economic efficiency oriented in the short-term increase in production and an increase in revenue and profit for rural communities. On the other hand, agroecotourism management is done by means of improving the welfare and health of the community.

Agroecotourism development has considered aspects of social capital on all development indicators. The Indicators are the increase in employment opportunities and businesses, social participation, vertical mobility, carrying capacity of agroecotourism and formation of civil society in rural areas significantly. Agroecotourism development as an effort of community empowerment which is material capital-based combined with social capital is an effort of sustainable community empowerment.

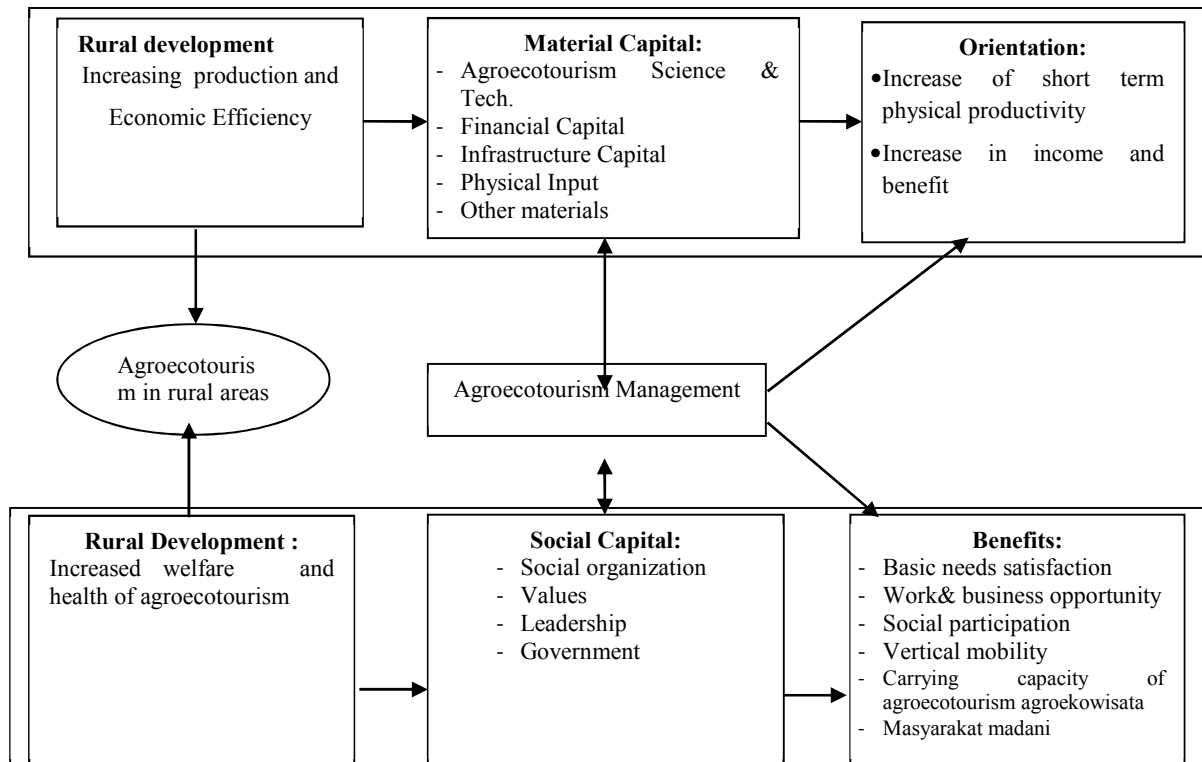


Figure 2: Relationship of agroecotourism management as community empowerment based in an integrated way on social capital and material in sustainable rural development.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Research Sites and Respondents

Pemo village was the research site. A purposive snowball sampling technique was used to identify respondents

3.2 Types and Sources of Data

3.2.1 Primary Data

Primary data was obtained directly in the field/direct through observation, interviews, and dialogue or discussion, PRA (participatory rural appraisal) with participant and non-participation observation,

3.2.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data were obtained from a literature study, written sources or documents relevant to this study

3.3 Data Analysis

Inductive data processing techniques were used, i.e. from the facts and events known concretely, and then they are generalized to a general conclusion based on empirical facts about the location of the research. Moloeng (2000) says that by using inductive analysis means data retrieval is not intended to prove the hypothesis that is formulated before the study is conducted. Further data analysis was performed by descriptive qualitative method.

4. Results and Discussion

Pemo village has an area of 9.38 km² located on the southeast side of Kelimutu National Park. It borders Woloara Village to the East and Tenda village to the West. On sloping land, farmers plant crops such as coffee, vanilla, hazelnut, oranges, bananas and on flat land seasonal crops such as sorghum, cassava, sweet potatoes, vegetables, whole grains and barley are planted. Pemo village has no indigenous forests under the control of one communal landlord (Mosalaki).

The climate in the region is generally hot and dry with enough rainfall between November-February. The average rainfall per year is 750 mm.

Table 1: Calendar of Agricultural Activities in Pemo Village

No	Month	Agricultural Activities
1	January and July	Harvesting
2	February and August	Land preparation
3	March and September	Preparing seeds for planting
4	April and October	Planting
5	May and November	weeding / gapping / hoeing
6	June and December	weeding and harvesting

Source: Adapted from interviews

Table 1 shows that Pemo has two planting seasons. Socio-economic conditions around the National Park Kelimutu are mostly still very traditional. Most villagers have no electricity, education, health, and modern transport is very limited. The main source income for the community is farming. Farming is mainly done using traditional tools and methods with organic inputs being emphasized. This will form a breath taking tourist attraction.

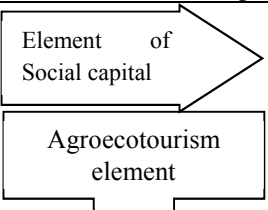
4.1 Traditional System and Culture of Pemo Village

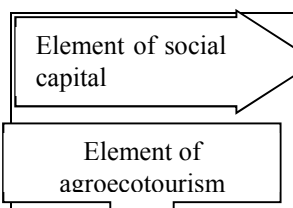
Pemo village is the extension of Koantara village. The villagers come from several villages and because they originate from various villages, the traditional system in Pemo village is a bit different from that of Edo-Lio. Agricultural land in the agro areas is not an alliance of indigenous lands or communal lands which is under one Mosalaki control as is common in Ende but that there is a family ownership that is coordinated by "Ata Laki or Mosalaki Ria Bewa" (a male head of the family) and they do not have "Keda-Kanga and Sa'o Ria " (the court for praying to God) which controls the community. The village has 11 Mosalaki Ria Bewa and 11 coordinators of community groups called tribes beyond the control of Mosalaki Ria Bewa. Each group has its members and they are more obedient to the call of the coordinator and their Mosalaki than to the government. Thus all activities must be endorsed by the Mosalaki and the coordinators.

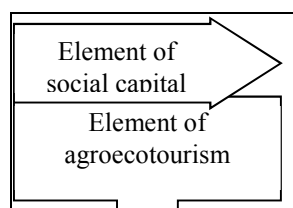
4.2 Agroecotourism development and social capital in Pemo Village

Having in mind the empowerment from the aspect of farmers' social capital in the development of agroecotourism, then information on the relationship of social capital with agroecotourism development can be identified in detail based on the elements of trust, norms and social networks which is completely seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Relationship of social capital and agroecotourism activities in the empowerment of farmers

<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Element of Social capital</p> <p>Agroecotourism element</p> </div>	<p style="text-align: center;">Element of Trust</p> <p>It is a growing expectation in a society, which is shown by existence of honest, orderly behavior, and cooperation based on the norms.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Mindset</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is awareness of the local community about the potentials in development of agroecotourism and they believe that there are typical places considered attractive to tourists. ▪ The belief in cooperation with outside parties so that there is the agreement of the local farmers to develop their potentials. ▪ The belief in the initiatives of outside parties (independent institutions) to encourage the local people to develop the potentials with the concept of sustainability. ▪ The belief in the land owners and there is an agreement with the community surrounding the area related with the development of the potentials. To develop the agroecotourism potentials particularly related with the rights and obligations. ▪ The belief by the central government and there is an agreement with the local government to help develop the agroecotourism potentials. ▪ The belief in the roles of stakeholders and there is an agreement with stakeholders about vision of the development of agroecotourism in the area. ▪ The belief that traditionally, the area is really attractive to the local people and tourists.
<p style="text-align: center;">Social</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The landowners believe that their lands must not come to the ownership of others and there is a written agreement between the community and Kelimutu National Park related to lands converted to agroecotourism development. ▪ There is the agreement between land owners and tenants about the proportion of the division of income received from the agroecotourism activities and the two parties believe in the agreement. ▪ There is formation of agroecotourism farmer groups. There is an agreement to plant the types of plants recommended and there is confidence that agroecotourism can increase the economic values of the location. ▪ Farmers believe that success in farming needs knowledge and skills. To that end there is a memorandum of understanding with the University of Flores to give training and assistance to agroecotourism farmers. ▪ Farmers believe that commodities provided are liked by visitors and they agree with the prices named. ▪ Farmers believe that the presence of visitors is profitable and they agree accepting and giving the best service. ▪ There are ‘‘awig-awigs’’ or written rules. Farmers believe that activities in the team need rules. ▪ The people believe tour guides are needed for agroecotourism to succeed. To this end, the local community is prepared to provide tour guides in the agroecotourism area. ▪ There is an agreement for Kelimutu National Park to train the tour guides. ▪ There is agreement from the community to offer their land for developing the agroecotourism area. ▪ There is an agreement about the proportion of income division received from the agroecotourism activities between the owners and tenants.
<p style="text-align: center;">Artefact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The cooperation is in line with the agreement to perform those things.. ▪ Improving the infrastructure (roads, shading place for tourists, location to enjoy the sceneries. ▪ Providing toilet. ▪ Arranging tracking paths passing the location of agroecotourism ▪ Preparing parking lots. ▪ Providing signboards ▪ Building meeting places for farmers in the location of agroecotourism. ▪ Preparing people’s houses as home stays for tourists wishing to spend the night. ▪ Preparing the local community to make typical souvenirs from the area. ▪ Preparing the location to sell souvenirs for tourists.
<p style="text-align: center;">Environment</p>	<p>Farmers believe that trees planted, cultural activities and cultivation with the use of low inorganic inputs is beneficial in the long run. Activities done are planting trees, vegetables & flowers, making vegetable pesticides, organic fertilizers, local seeds.</p>

	<p>Norms /regulations/values: Norms consist of understandings, values, expectations, & goals adopted and used together by a group of people.</p>
Mindset	The parties involved understand the importance of norms, regulations, values, expectations, objectives that must be realized in the teamwork both in writing and conventionally.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is unwritten agreement with ‘tua adat’(the traditional elders) farmers, and the local community to develop agroecotourism. ▪ There is a written agreement between land owners and Kelimutu National Park to make their lands as agroecotourism businesses. ▪ There is an agreement between Kelimutu National Park and University of Flores (a local University) in developing agroecotourism in Kelimutu. ▪ There is unwritten agreement between land owners and tenants on rights and obligations for dividends in agroecotourism businesses.. ▪ There is regulation for entry tariff and unallowable to take whatever from the area except buying the product of agroecotourism. ▪ There is written agreement between land owners and Kelimutu National Park to make their lands available for agroecotourism.
Arteifact	There is memorandum of understanding on cultivation (preparation of seeds, lands, type of plants and a working calendar) MoU including boundaries of areas that can be used for agroecotourism, and a written agreement for what can be done and what cannot be done by tourists.
Environment	There is a regulation what trees to be planted, the design to be used the species, plant and row measurements, cultivation procedures, maintenance via non slash dan burn, use of organic manure, natural pesticide, not littering in the area.

	<p>Social Networking: This constitutes dynamic infrastructure in the form of cooperative networks among humans. The network facilitates communication and interaction for the possible growth of confidence. All involved in agroecotourism are aware of the importance of social network in realizing the goals of aroecotourism development.</p>
Mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction among farmers of agroecotourism in Kelimutu • Interaction between farmers and Kelimutu National Park • Interaction of farmers and rural government.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using local language
Arteifact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written and spoken • In writing and oral in the form of photos, videos, written reports with communication media, mobile phone, camera, recorded voice and discussion or dialogue.. • Building direct communication and using media.
Environment	Building friendly and conducive communication between all parties with media.

Based on the description about the relationship between social capitals and community empowerment through the development of agroecotourism, then a design is made on agroecotourism development as social capital-based empowerment combined with empowerment with non-social capital. To support the sustainability of agroecotourism development, then all forms of capitals that have been integrated need to be developed in terms of the empowerment by strengthening social capital as shown in Figure 3

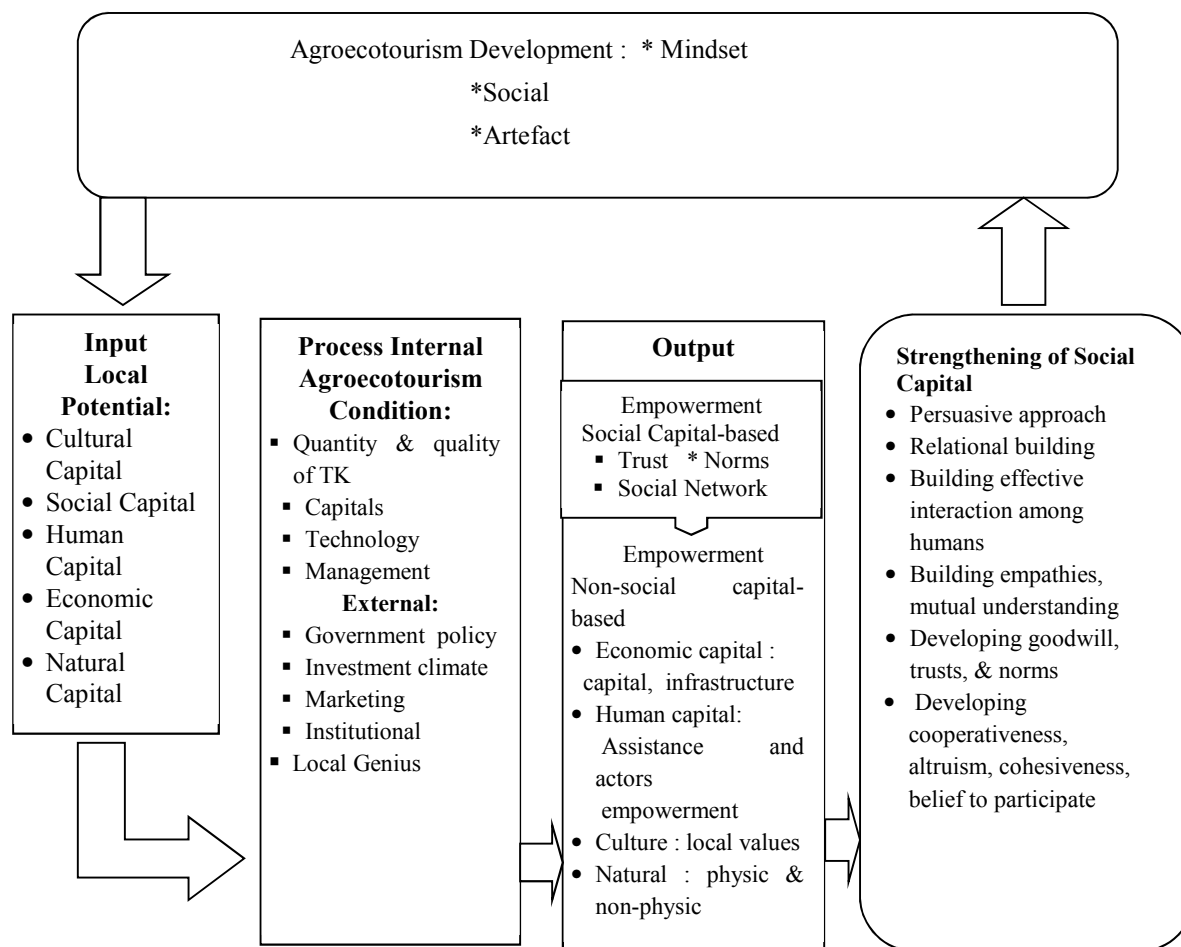


Figure 3: Design of agroecotourism development as a social capital-based empowerment by strengthening social capital

Agroecotourism development is one of the forms of community empowerment. In the subsequent management, various local potentials are first identified. The potential is developed by taking into account the internal and external factors in a comprehensive manner so that agroecotourism development can be realized optimally. In connection with it, social capital became the core of empowerment of various capital needs to be developed through strengthening social capital.

Pemo village community empowerment has been more focused on material capital strengthening, the use of the networks of project-based organizations and government which are centralized, top-down, and monolithic. Figure 3 offers agroecotourism design that combines the development of social capital and other capitals. In this context, the government can be a facilitator because social capital based-community empowerment should come from the community or farmers themselves with bottom-up system.

5. Closing

Farmers in Pemo village understand agroecotourism development as community empowerment activity, however, it is not accompanied by efforts to develop the local values so that internal conflicts arise between land owners and tenants which have an impact on the neglect of commitment to the agreements that have been built together.

A memorandum of understanding for norms and rules relating to the status of land used for development of agroecotourism has been made. However, conflict of interests, lack of togetherness, communication breakdown, as well as the loss of trust between parties involved triggers the stagnancy of agroecotourism activity in Pemo village.

Agroecotourism development for community empowerment in Pemo village at the moment has been focused on material capital and human capital, while strengthening social capital is seemingly not as important.

Suggestion

Agroecotourism development needs to pay attention to strengthening the development of social capital with some of the indicators, i.e. social structure and cooperativeness, the creation of a sense of solidarity, social

management, organizational network of the local people must be encouraged.

Agroecotourism development as community empowerment needs to be supported by strengthening social capital, and should involve all levels of society from the bottom, i.e. village, adat (traditional) communities, to the village level and the government as a facilitator.

Approaching back land owner and other parties and ensure the realization of its contribution in accordance with its proper importance or relocating places for Agroecotourism development on lands owned by other farmers based on a feasibility study.

Restructuring actors of empowerment involving all parties needs to be done and reinforced with written rules to ensure legality in its implementation.

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