

Developing the Indicator of Local Institutions Sustainability on a Local Community Program

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DEVELOPING THE INDICATOR OF LOCAL INSTITUTIONS SUSTAINABILITY ON A LOCAL COMMUNITY PROGRAM

Eko Priyo Purnomo¹

Abstract

Local Institutions in many cases have own mechanisms and own procedures to implement their programs and reach their goals. They develop the procedures based on their contexts and knowledge. As a result, there are quite a lot of the types of procedures and indicators in the local communities. The aim of this paper is developing the indicators of local institutions that the institutions are to be aware of sustainability issues. Even though, they have own procedures, there should be a generic indicator that supports for sustainability of the program and its institutions.

This research was conducted in a local community in Leeds, United Kingdom. The selected community has established a local program that want to encourage local people to be aware on sustainable environment and institutions. Besides, there are stakeholders who participate actively and some of them do not participate actively. The active stakeholders tried to encourage the marginal actors to participate in the program. In this paper, it is clear that local community can create their own program and implement their program sustainably. There is a lesson learned that the local community can develop the sustainable indicators.

Keywords: Local Institutions, sustainability, community, stakeholder, and indicators of sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

During the 1970s and 1980s, there was an expanding number of NGOs across the globe and the rapidly increasing number reveals an explosion of environmental activists and issues (Doyle, 1999). For example, the number of Greenpeace members was a dramatic growth from 1.4 million to 6.65 million between 1985 and 1990 (Doyle, 1999) whilst the Green NGOs are part of new social movements and also the idea of a participation community. They propose and exemplify how the environment can be managed in a sustainable and participatory way.

Participation is a very popular term and a value that relies on the development and implementation of local, national and international policies. It seems that participation of the community or institutions is very important to create sustainability of the environment. It reflects that participation

is one important contributor for supporting sustainability, efficiency, and effectiveness of development of rural community. In other words, sustainable agriculture requires participation that can be demanding of actor awareness and capacity building (Lele, 1991). And then participation in this essay will be analysed by stakeholder analysis (SHA).

The goal of this essay, based on the case study of the Bardon Grange Allotment Project (BGAP) that was initiated by Leeds Student Union (LSU) in January 2009, is to understand the stakeholder involvement and elaborate the sustainability indicators that have been used in this project. It could be important to understand the stakeholders if we want to explain the community participation that arose on this project. And also it is necessary to measure the indicators of its sustainability if we want to know the values and knowledge of these stakeholders as well.

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Therefore, this essay will be divided into four parts that attempt to answer the question of who the main actors that lead this project are, and then to what extent the stakeholder can contribute environmental sustainability. Also the question 'what are the indicators which can implement support to sustainability?'. First of all, it will offer introduction to the background of this essay. Secondly, it will explain the method that has been chosen to gather, reduce and analyze the data. Thirdly, it will elaborate and describe the data analysis, and the last part will conclude and suggest what the stakeholder pattern reveals about this project and indicators that can be useful for further research.

METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework

Stakeholders mean many actors who are involved in the event or activity and those who have an interest or requirements from it for themselves. The term of stakeholder comes from Habermas, who thought that it could be used to elaborate on the path between communicative rationality, which is people seeking to reach understanding and cooperation to solve their problem, and instrumental rationality on communicative action, which is people reaching the goal by control and changing the reality (Habermas, 1987). And then, this term has been expanded by some scientists such as Mitchell (1997) and Fletcher (2003) where they develop, identify and also define who and how to do the SHA.

Moreover, the SHA has been expanding across the world, implemented by business organisations, local, national and international institutions. The SHA has been understood as a process which identifies individuals, group, and organisations who are affected by it or can affect part of events, including nonhuman,

non-living entities and future generations (Reed, et al., 2009). Reed also suggests that development of natural resources requires understanding the different perspective of the actors involved (Reed, et al., 2009).

Therefore, the SHA in this essay can be divided into several indicators (Diagram 2) that is adopted from some scientists (Lele, 1991; Lillements, 2003; Reed, et al., 2008 and 2009). Firstly, inclusivity is believed to be a tool to analyse many groups and actors who are involved in the phenomenon. Secondly, empowerment is a value that can encourage and empower marginal actors such as women, children and low-structured society. Thirdly, development of networking has been created to link between internal and external stakeholders of the organisation. The last one is a model of communication which is how the stakeholders communicate with each other and how the flow of information has been used.

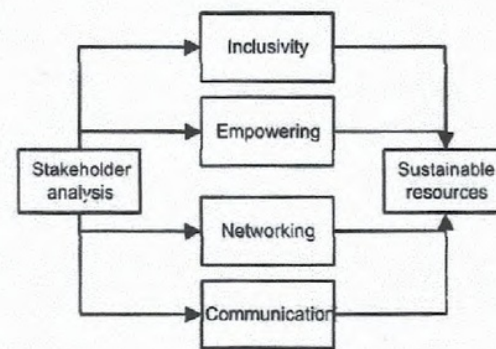


Diagram 2
Theoretical Framework

Research Method

Qualitative methods are the main umbrella of this research which have been used to carry out and also analyse the data (Diagram 1). Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a selection of empirical materials such as a case study,

personal experiences, observation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Moreover, this research will use a case study analysis. The case study analysis is useful for studying human affairs because it is down-to-earth and learns from the empirical (Stake, 2000). Because it is a case study, the main concern may be with understanding the case itself, with no interest in the theoretical and generalisation (Gomm, et al., 2000). However, this method is able to explain and it can try to do one or both of these (Gomm, et al., 2000).

The study area that has been selected is the BGAP. It belongs to the University of Leeds's plant nurseries and is placed next the Oxley Halls of residence in Headingley. The staffs at the project have encouraged their participants to use a patch of ground for growing fruit and veg. There is a reasonably large poly tunnel and use of some of the heated greenhouses for germinating seeds, until it is warm enough to plant them outside (Group's Facebook, 2010 and interview, 2010). In addition, the BGAP aims to exhibit to students and local people how to cultivate organic fruit and veg as well. The project was established in January 2009 and is coordinated by the LSU volunteering and community office. Currently the project only has a few members and the LSU would really like to find more volunteers so they attempt to *campaign and recruit more participants*. Therefore, it will be an interesting project that has collaboration between participation of local people and environmental issues.

Two types of data were collected. First of all, secondary data is data that comes from other researchers or other institutions (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). The researcher collected documents, photos and literature which relate to land management, SHA, and historical patterns of landscape change not only in theory but also practice. It is

useful to examine the relationship between the changing local social and political relations that lead to how people control land and vegetation and then to elaborate on how the stakeholders communicate with each other (Fairhead and Leach, 1996).

The second data that was collected was primary data. It is original data collected by the researchers themselves; this research used semi-structured interview, or interviews with a cross-section of stakeholders to check focus group data. And then it is applied by snow-ball sampling to find the interviewees, whereby individuals from initial stakeholder categories were interviewed, and then they recommended the next respondents. In addition, the respondents of the research were the project manager, the officer, the member of this project and the local people. The chosen respondents attempt to represent the stakeholders involved in the BGAP. This researcher also conducted observation at the same time which is useful to understand the culture and the way of life of the community because Winchester said that people have their own words that can be used to tell us their experiences and attitudes but they may be alert to their social structure and position (Winchester, in Hay 2005).

Therefore, this research has some limitations such as the limited data and respondents, time allocation and representation. Relating to the method, this is not appropriate if the research wants to develop generalisations and also it is limited due to data and respondents. Secondly, time allocation, as the research has been conducted during the holiday and severe weather affected the data so it was not an ideal time to carry out the research. Thirdly, snow-ball sampling showed some weaknesses such as the respondents have a relation to each other so this could create a bias value and perception in this data (Hay, 2005; Reed, 2009).

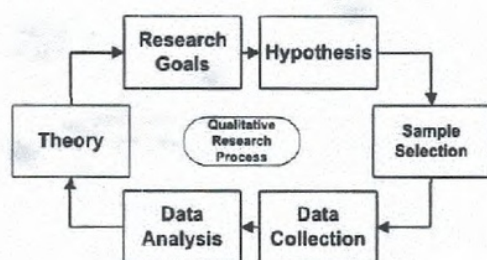


Diagram 1
Research Procedures

DATA ANALYSIS

There are several issues relating this project that were found during the research. These matters attempt to answer the research questions, find the research objectives and also to understand the main context of these projects relayed through SHA.

Inclusivity of Organization

Inclusivity will be explained by some approaches that are used to describe the data. First of all, it can be asked, is this organization open or closed? (epress.anu.edu.au, 2010). An open organization relates to the organization that makes it easy to become a member and a closed-organisation is one that is not easy to interact with or become a new member (epress.anu.edu.au, 2010). Secondly, is it a bureaucratic procedural or flexible organization? The bureaucratic organization refers to one that involves a lot of complicated official rules and processes. And then flexible refers to an organization which can adapt its environment and change its rule to synchronise with its environment (Anderson, 1999; James, 2003).

The project clearly wants to educate people to be aware of organic fruits and vegetables. The officer and member argue that producing knowledge and spreading their value to society means leading by example. Many ideas have been published

about planting and consuming organic fruits but this is less effective so the best idea is to exhibit directly and invite people to join in. Relating to this belief, the project is an open organisation and it is easy to participate. It does not care about gender, race, and social political background of the stakeholder.

The participants who engage with the project have different backgrounds and identities. As a member commented "Women are as welcome to get involved as men" (Member Interview, 2010). Besides, there are no fees, no requirements and no procedures if anyone wants to become a member of the program. In other words, the participants just pay with their commitment to join (Officer Interview, 2010). As a result, members are so diverse and heterogeneous. It seems that this project's philosophy is to be open-minded and concerned about participation issues.

Currently, the BGAP are looking for a new leader or a coordinator who can lead, create the program, find the funding and discover more ideas. They advertise on the portal and LSU website. Also, the requirements are quite general and the LUU just posted what the responsibilities and duties are. It is evidence that the BGAP is used to an open organization because they can receive everyone without looking at their background, not only for members but also in recruiting a coordinator.

The BGAP is a flexible and adaptable organisation as well. This is not only because it is a new organization but also due to the commitment of their stakeholders. The stakeholders understand the consequence of being a voluntary organization. The volunteers should adapt to their environment because the main value of voluntary service is to be a willing participant and without being forced.

Empowering

In terms of empowering issues, there are some data that can be sought. The officer says that there are lots of programs on television about healthy lifestyle, and they demonstrate to people how to plant organic vegetables, how they grow lots of fruit as an example (Officer, Interview, 2010). Nevertheless, it is quite difficult to educate people from television so the best way is show them directly (Picture 1). Therefore, the BGAP is useful as it encourages people to grow vegetables, which they may not have had a chance to do before. It provides the chance to learn new skills, make new friends, and learn about the importance of organic and locally produced food. It also uses land in a productive way, and will hopefully in future provide a source of local food for the university. In addition, this program offers support to marginal society, such as women and children. While opportunities for children to get involved have yet to be implemented, discussions on having some events for the local school children to attend the site to get involved in the project are ongoing. It is clear that through stakeholder consent marginal actors can get involved in the project.

Moreover, this project contributes to the university communities, through providing a new social activity, and a chance to get involved in food growing and also the local community gets additional support for underrepresented groups such as women and children. The project also gives people the opportunity to get involved if they work at the union, and their friends and family too. Although some of the programs are not implemented yet, most of the stakeholders agree to re-design it. They want to create a program in which children can visit this place.

Networking

This project has a regular meeting every Wednesday and then they also have another meeting once a month on Saturday. In the meeting, they discussed and evaluated everything that was done last month. And then they will make plans for what the stakeholders want to do and plant next month. The regular meeting is important because it shows that the project has a mechanism where every actor can contribute and share their beliefs and ideas. In addition, every student, staff member and people who are interested in this program can join and be present at the meeting. It seems that the project recognizes stakeholder legitimacy is most valuable for sustainability in this program.

Networking with other organizations can be useful for building contacts and also it can help to spread the project's ideas. Regarding this issue, there are several organizations that are connected, such as LSU, Niels Corfield (organic grower), Green Action Coop, and the NUS (National Union of Students) a voluntary membership organization for students. As a result, there are some activities that have been created and some support that has been received. For example, some of the lettuces they grew last year were put in some burgers at a barbeque at the Terrace at the LUU, and also at the Arch (the bar at LUU). They have also been involved in Unity Day, an event in Hyde Park. For these events they received money and equipment from the NUS, Leeds Life and LUU. Networking is a crucial issue if the organization wants to survive and also expand their idea.

Communication model

The style of communication is divided into two parts, informal and formal communication (Miller, 2005; Em Griffin,

2008). The informal communication arises from non-formal channels, such as impersonal relationships. There are some characteristics of informal communication. It does not come from authority; it is created during personal relationships amongst members of the organisation; it happens at times of personal need. Understanding of informal communication is useful to analyse who the keeper and follower in the organisation are and then it can be used to describe how deep the relationships are between stakeholders. Moreover, the opposite of informal communication is formal communication, which is communication using a channel, such as a meeting. It can be legal or procedural. Understanding of these terms is a good way to analyse how well-managed a project is and then to know who the responsible person in the institution is (www.basiccollegeaccounting.com, 2010).

During the interview and observation, most of the stakeholders used informal communication. They shared their opinion and also they found the project using informal communication. The information about the project and meeting agenda are spread through informal channels such as Facebook and mobile text message. The member says that he joined because he saw on the group's Facebook page and also on the university Portal (member interview, 2010). Besides, the formal communication is less useful to distribute the information among members. The officer usually uses the weekly (on Wednesday) and monthly meeting (on Saturday) to share any information. On this point, this project has a regular meeting that can be a place where all stakeholders share and get information. The information that has been discussed come from not only from inside stakeholders but also outside stakeholders.

Another analytical perspective on communication issues is about the flow of information. This means a study about where the information comes from and whether it is segregated by top down or bottom up models (Littlejohn, 2002; Em Griffin, 2008). There are two kinds of approach. Firstly is the downward communication which is the way where the information comes from the organisation leader. Secondly is the upward communication which is the way where the information comes from the organisation members and this model is a relatively participatory model. In this case, the information usually comes from the officer and the union. This assumption is supported by a member who said "I think one of the things is that information is coming in on this issue originally from the officer" (member interview, 2010). Therefore, it is clear that downward flow information is dominant in this organization/project.

CONCLUSION

Participation is a popular term not only with politics but also for environmental issues and this perspective can be important to develop sustainable resources. The research that has been done is to analyse that perspective using SHA where the research has been conducted on the local community project. During the research on BGAP, the case has shown that participation amongst stakeholders happened smoothly. Using SHA, it is clear that there are several stakeholders involved in this project, such as the LUU, The officer, the members, and the local community. Moreover, the two main stakeholders who affected this project are the LUU and the officer.

The case study has some weaknesses in terms of method and representative issue

such as the SHA has been used less to carry out categorisation of stakeholders so the stakeholders cannot be analysed properly. And then the respondents or participants who attended in the interview are too few so it is difficult to create generalisations

and analyse deeply. However, this research attempts to develop some indicators that can be useful for future research on sustainability on a community project using SHA (table 1).

Indicators	Parameters	Description	Strengths	Weaknesses
Inclusivity of Organisation	An open organisation	The organisation accepts members easily and people from different backgrounds can be accepted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They can find many members and expand their organisation faster. • The members who join will be loyal members • The membership is diverse 	The member is less committed and also the member will be able to leave the organization (easy to come and easy to go)
	A closed organisation	The organization does not accept a member without recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization will find a qualified- member • It is difficult to leave this organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization is difficult to find a member especially if the organization is a new one. • They will be less expanded • The member comes from the same belief and idea (nepotism effect)
	A bureaucratic procedural organisation	The organization has some rules and procedures that have been followed strictly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They can make sure their targets and goals. • Their stakeholder cannot change their rules • The stakeholder have to follow the procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization cannot adapt the environment changing easily. • The member/ stakeholder can be bored to join the organization.
	A Flexible/ adaptable organisation	The organization has a main rule and relatively adaptable and easy to change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization will be easy to adapt and change their environment and base it on their stakeholder needs • The members can express their ideas easily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is difficult to control their stakeholder's or member interruption. • The organization's rules are easy to change

Developing the indicator...

Empowering issues	Support marginalized society	The organisation support and also facilitate marginalized society such as women, children and low class that reflect on their goals and programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization can educate more people and help them. • The program can down to earth and solve the community problem as well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program should have enough resources to implement their program.
	Un-support marginalized society	The organisation does not support and also facilitate marginalized society such as women, children and low class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project does not need more resources. • The program can be implemented as much as the institution needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Institution does not contribute to reduce the social problem
	Contribute local community	The organization has programs can support and also encourage local people not only to join in their program but also spend their resources to this program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization can reduce poverty in their area. • The local community can be aware the organization and they can support it as their program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization has to spend more resources.
	Not contribute local community	The organisation does not have programs to support local people also they do not spend anything from this program to local people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization's goals can be implemented sooner. • The stakeholder can create anything as much as they want. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program is only for inside stakeholder and less participation. • The project is just profit oriented.
Networking issues	Building a network	The organisation and stakeholder create a network with other actors or organisations that have a same idea or goal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization's goals can be implemented sooner and will get lots of support such as money, equipment. • Their aims and goals can be functional for building to massive effect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation should deal with lots of interest and it could spend lots of resources. • The organisation has to accommodate many ideas and it can be difficult to solve problems and deal with.
	Not link any organisations	The organisation and stakeholder does not link any networks with other actors or organisations that have a same idea or goal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The stakeholder and organisation just pay attention with their idea and they can focus on their goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They cannot reach their program sooner. • They cannot receive lots of support from other actors and they will fail to expand their program.

Communication issues	Informal communication	The model of communication uses personal contact, impersonal communication and at times directly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The stakeholder relationship will be personal and close to each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The commitment is the most important. • It has a risk such as a personal conflict amongst stakeholders.
	Formal communication	The model of communication uses a formal channel such as a meeting and a letter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information is clearer and manageable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relationship amongst stakeholder is not close and has a barrier.
	Up-ward flow information	The flow of information comes from the members or lower stakeholders of the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much information can be gathered and collected. • It is more participatory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It needs more resources to deal with, such as time allocation.
	Down-ward flow information	The flow of information comes from the leader or the officer of organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information is robust and clear like an instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information is monotone and boring and less participatory.

Stakeholder analysis indicator for sustainability on community project

Table 1

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