

Description of Extension Activities in Transmigrant Communities in Banyuasin and Ogan Ilir District South Sumatra Province, Indonesia

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Abstract

Extension activities play an important role in developing human resources for transmigrants in farming. Extension aims to develop targets to become human resources capable of improving the quality of life independently. The purpose of this study was to describe the extension activities to transmigrant communities in Banyuasin and Ogan Ilir Regencies, South Sumatra. The study was conducted from May 2016 to January 2017. The total population was 3,537 transmigrant households. The number of the samples in this study was determined using Slovin formula. The study involved 359 respondents determined by stratified random sampling. The research data consisted of primary data and secondary data. The primary data was obtained through structured interviews, in-depth interviews, and field observations. The results of the study showed that the conditions for extension activities in the two districts were low for all measured aspects, namely: intensity of extension, suitability of materials, suitability of methods, and capacity of extension personnel.

Keywords: *Extension Activities, Transmigrant, Transmigration.*

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A. INTRODUCTION

Transmigration is the voluntary movement of people to improve welfare and settle in transmigration areas organized by the government. The basic concept of transmigration development is an effort to bring together Human Resources (HR) and natural resources through population movement and spatial use.

The implementation of transmigration has the potential to contribute to overcoming some national problems, including continuing regional development, increasing food production, expanding employment opportunities, and business opportunities for the economically weak and reducing poverty. The transmigration program is expected to empower the potential of the community in areas known as transmigration development areas by revitalizing the agricultural sector (in addition to other business patterns) so as to increase community income and reduce poverty. With this in mind, transmigration is still considered relevant as a development approach in order to achieve welfare goals, equitable regional development, as well as the glue of national unity and integrity. The success and sustainability of the transmigration program is largely determined by the quality of transmigrant human resources who are the main pillars of transmigration programs and activities, so that the transmigration program is not optimal if it only relies on physical development

and facilities and pays less attention to the development of transmigrant human resources.

Extension activities play an important role in developing human resources for transmigrants in farming. Extension aims to develop targets to become human resources capable of improving the quality of life independently. According to Slamet (2003a), if counseling is carried out properly, the target will be able to carry out business activities independently. The purpose of this study was to describe the extension activities to transmigrant communities in Banyuasin and Ogan Ilir Regencies, South Sumatra.

B. METHOD

The type of research used is descriptive research, namely to explain the research variables. The research was conducted from May 2016 to January 2017. The research location was in Banyuasin and Ogan Ilir Regencies, South Sumatra Province, with the consideration that it is an area with a large number of transmigrants in South Sumatra Province. The total population is 3,537 transmigrant households. The sample size in this study is determined using the Slovin formula. The number of samples was 359 respondents. Stratified random sampling, with the strata: Transmigration settlement, year of placement, type of transmigration, and origin of transmigration (local and outside the province). Data collection was carried out to obtain primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through structured interviews, in-depth interviews, and field observations. Descriptive data were processed by categorizing and scoring.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The condition of the extension activities in the two districts was low for all measured aspects, namely: intensity of extension, suitability of materials, suitability of methods, and capacity of extension personnel (Table 1). This condition also illustrates the quality of outreach activities at transmigration sites. In more detail, the description of these conditions is described in the following description.

Extension Intensity

Most of the transmigrants (73.8 percent) had never participated in any extension activities in the past year (Table 2). The low participation of transmigrants in extension activities is due to the very low frequency of implementation of extension activities in transmigration areas.

The main commodities planted by transmigrants were plantation crops, namely rubber and oil palm, while the scientific specifications of the extension workers were about food crops; so that the extension workers do not do enough extension in the area. This is the main reason for the very low frequency of implementation of extension activities.

Table 1 Distribution of respondents based on the extension activities attended in Banyuasin and Ogan Ilir 2016

Sub Variable Extension Activities	Category	District		Total (n=359)
		Banyuasin (n=284)	Ogan Ilir (n=75)	
		%	%	%
Extension intensity** Average score: 44,3	Low	51,4	88,0	59,0
	Medium	33,8	10,7	29,0
	High	14,8	1,3	12,0
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0
Suitability of extension material Average score: 38,1	Less	79,9	96,0	83,3
	Enough	14,1	2,7	11,7
	Suitable	6,0	1,3	5,0
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0
Appropriateness of extension methods Average score: 33,3	Less	81,7	98,7	85,2
	Enough	12,7	1,3	10,3
	Suitable	5,6	0,0	4,5
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0
Educator skills Average score: 35,4	Low	77,4	81,3	73,9
	Medium	12,7	13,3	15,4
	High	9,9	5,4	10,7
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

Note:** the difference is very significant at $\alpha=0,01$

Mean scores: Low = 0-50, Medium = 51-75, High = 76-100

The low level of extension activities from the Agriculture Office was offset by training activities. Training is one method of extension. The Transmigration Service, as the main party dealing with transmigrants, often conducts training for transmigrants; including collaborating with training and research institutions including the Sembawa Rubber Research Center and the South Sumatra Agricultural Technology Research Center. Until a period of five years, since the placement of transmigrants, these training activities are managed by the transmigration settlement unit organization located at the transmigration location. After a period of five years the training activities are managed directly by the District Transmigration Office.

Almost all transmigrants are involved in training on farming techniques, such as: plant cultivation, raising livestock, composting, post-harvest treatment; while training related to managerial, only invited representatives from farmer groups. Training materials on managerial, such as: leadership, human resource development, joint management of farmer groups, cooperative management, and village government management.

Non-formal education such as counseling or training serves to bridge the gap between the practices that farmers should or are used to and the ever-evolving knowledge and technology that farmers need. Farmers want to carry out good

agricultural practices, which can increase their farming yields, for that farmers need solid new knowledge and technology, and this gap can only be bridged by providing counseling (Kartasapoetra 1991). Transmigrants who take part in extension activities or training at transmigration locations have the opportunity to obtain additional information and new skills in accordance with developments in agricultural science and technology.

Table 2 Percentage of respondents based on frequency of extension activities in Banyuasin and Ogan Ilir 2016

Indicator	Banyuasin (n=284)			Ogan Ilir (n=75)			Total (n=359)		
	Never	1-3 times	> 3 times	Never	1-3 times	> 3 times	Never	1-3 times	> 3 times
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Extension frequency (last year)	71,8	25,4	2,8	81,3	17,4	1,3	73,8	23,7	2,5
Training frequency	4,6	45,8	49,6	4,0	64,0	32,0	4,5	49,5	46,0

Suitability of Extension Materials

The suitability of the material for extension activities is in the low category (Table 1). Measurements are based on the material presented through activities carried out by the Agricultural Service and the Transmigration Service. The low intensity of extension activities (carried out by the Department of Agriculture) at transmigration sites has resulted in low suitability of extension materials.

Through training activities conducted by the Transmigration Service, transmigrants receive sufficient material in accordance with the farming activities being carried out. The materials received by transmigrants in training activities related to swampland cultivation, as well as techniques for cultivating rubber and oil palm trees, are the main commodities of transmigrant farming. The problem is, training activities are held in a short duration of time, are not carried out continuously, and are made incidentally.

The material in the training activities organized by the Transmigration Office is quite appropriate to the business conditions of transmigrants, but transmigrants are still constrained in implementing them (Table 3). Such as the recommended technology regarding land cultivation with the use of ameliorant materials on a scheduled basis, the use of fertilizers according to the dosage, and the use of superior seeds. Transmigrants said they were constrained by business capital so that it was difficult to implement this.

Transmigrants also stated that the training materials had not discussed in detail the important problems of transmigrants in developing their businesses, such as: access to business capital and production facilities. Transmigrants really need counseling materials related to the development of farming activities, including: business planning, production inputs including access to superior seeds, prevention

and control of plant diseases, post-harvest technology, fertilization and access to business capital, maintaining product quality, and developing partnerships with other parties. Extension material should be extracted from the real problems and needs of transmigrants as the subject of extension. The results of this study are in line with the findings of Bulu et al. (2009) stated that the innovation material offered in extension activities was not in accordance with the needs of the subject.

Table 3 Percentage of respondents based on perceptions about the suitability of material in extension activities in Banyuasin and Ogan Ilir in 2016

Indicator	Banyuasin (n=284)		Ogan Ilir (n=75)		Total (n=359)	
	Less	Suitable	Less	Suitable	Less	Suitable
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Extension						
Contentment of the material with business conditions	83,4	16,6	93,3	6,7	85,5	14,5
Ease of application	95,4	4,6	96,0	4,0	95,6	4,4
Alignment of material with problems	93,3	6,7	94,6	5,4	93,6	6,4
Training						
Classification of material with business conditions	22,2	77,8	42,7	57,3	26,5	73,5
Ease of application	76,1	23,9	69,3	30,7	74,7	25,3
Alignment of material with problems	68,7	31,3	42,7	34,7	67,7	32,3

Ideally, the material presented is based on the conditions of the transmigrants and is useful for overcoming the problems being faced by transmigrants. The way to match the material with the real conditions of the transmigrants is to involve the transmigrants identifying needs. The suitability of the material with the needs and problems of extension targets, makes extension activities effective. According to Kartasapoetra (1991), extension materials that solve the problems being faced attract more interest and appreciation of farmers so that extension can achieve its goals.

As well as the statement by Slamet (2003b), the information provided in extension must be in accordance with the conditions of the area where the farmer is located. Extension workers need to master the ecosystem in their working area, such as location-specific technology needed by farmers, superior commodities, land characteristics, and climate.

Appropriateness of Extension Methods

The suitability of the methods for transmigrants in extension activities is in the low category (Table 1). There was no significant difference in the level of suitability of extension methods between Banyuasin and Ogan Ilir Regencies.

The low suitability of methods occurred in extension activities and also in training activities at transmigration sites (Table 4). This is due to the lack of practical methods in extension activities. The lecture method was considered by transmigrants to be difficult to understand, and the transmigrants' understanding and memory of the lecture material was relatively low. This is in line with the

statement of van den Ban and Hawkins (1999) regarding the shortcomings of lectures, namely that the material delivered orally tends to be easily forgotten. Lecture is also a weak method of teaching the application of an innovation.

Implementation of training, often using practical methods, but the implementation time of the training is less than optimal (such as training in rubber cultivation for only one day), the mismatch of training weight with the number of hours practiced; so that there is not enough time allocation for discussions to address problems. In addition, transmigrants as training participants are less involved in a participatory manner in extension activities or training, such as: in finding answers/solutions to any problems discussed.

Table 4 Percentage of respondents based on perceptions about the suitability of methods in extension activities in Banyuasin and Ogan Ilir in 2016

Indicator	Banyuasin (n=284)		Ogan Ilir (n=75)		Total (n=359)	
	Less	Suitable	Less	Suitable	Less	Suitable
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Extension						
The accuracy of the examples demonstrated with the material discussed	78,5	21,5	94,7	5,3	81,9	18,1
The accuracy of the examples given with the problems faced	82,7	17,3	93,3	6,7	85,0	15,0
Participatory involvement of participants	96,8	3,2	94,7	5,3	96,4	3,6
Training						
The accuracy of the example demonstrated with the material discussed	34,2	65,8	77,3	22,7	43,2	56,8
The accuracy of the examples given with the problems faced	47,9	52,1	88,0	12,0	56,3	43,7
Participatory involvement of participants	81,3	18,7	96,0	4,0	84,4	15,6

The method used determines the achievement of extension objectives. Extension workers who deal directly with transmigrants are required to master various extension methods and be able to apply them well and be able to combine various types of methods in every meeting with transmigrants. The extension method will affect the level of understanding of transmigrants / farmers of the material presented by the extension agents. According to van Den Ban and Hawkins (1999), the effectiveness of extension is influenced by the method chosen and how it is used. The choice of method should consider: (1) the objectives to be achieved, (2) the size and level of education of the target group, (3) the level of trust between the target group and extension agents, (4) the skills of the extension agents, (5) the workforce and resources required available, (6) available time scale, and (7) integrated with other methods, so that the methods are mutually reinforcing. The

most effective extension method is a combination of various methods. The method used in extension activities affects the formation of opinions and decision making of farmers as targets of extension.

Extension Ability

The capacity of extension personnel in extension activities is low (Table 1). Extension workers do not help transmigrants if there are problems in farming activities. This happens because extension workers from the Department of Agriculture have different scientific specifications from the transmigrant farming sector. The main commodities planted by transmigrants were plantation crops, namely rubber and oil palm, while the scientific specifications of the extension workers were about food crops. This is in line with the findings of Tamba and Sarma (2007), that extension workers are less able to provide the information needed by farmers.

Extension officers visited transmigrants only occasionally and not at all transmigration settlement locations, the aim was to monitor and collect data for the benefit of the agency. Sometimes, extension workers also provided counseling on the technique of cultivating intercrops (vegetables) that some transmigrants had grown. In addition, the extension workers also provided counseling on the development of activities of transmigrant farmer groups and facilitated the distribution of subsidized fertilizers.

In line with the efforts to develop transmigrant empowerment, the Transmigration Office conducts training activities at transmigration locations. Transmigrants said that the instructors at these trainings were quite capable of delivering the material well, so that it was quite easy for prospective transmigrants to understand (Table 5). According to transmigrants, instructors also always try to motivate transmigrants to promote farming activities that are being carried out; however, training activity instructors were not involved in facilitating transmigrants in their daily farming activities. Interaction is limited to the time of training; so that if there are problems in farming, transmigrants do not have access to consult the problem with extension workers or instructors.

Table 5 Percentage of respondents based on perceptions about the ability of extension workers in Banyuasin and Ogan Ilir in 2016

Indicator	Banyuasin (n=284)		Ogan Ilir (n=75)		Total (n=359)	
	Less	Able	Less	Able	Less	Able
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Educator						
Ability to deliver material	75,7	24,3	81,3	18,7	76,9	23,1
The ability to motivate	75,7	24,3	94,6	5,4	79,7	20,3
Instructor						
Ability to deliver material	31,3	68,7	52,0	48,0	35,7	64,3
The ability to motivate	16,2	83,8	29,3	70,7	19,0	81,0

The capacity of extension workers is an important factor in extension activities to develop the capacity or capacity of transmigrant resources. Extension officers with competencies in accordance with the needs of the community will be better able to mobilize the community they assisted. Slamet (1995) argues that professional personnel in the field of extension are decisive in the development of extension activities. Rustandi and Hariri (2012) state that competent extension workers have a very strategic role as the spearhead of agricultural development, especially in developing the quality of the main actors and business actors, so that they are able to organize themselves in accessing market information, technology, business facilities, and capital.

Facing the flow of globalization in the form of trade liberalization, changes in consumer preferences for agricultural products and efforts towards environmental sustainability, requires a dynamic approach to extension activities to follow changes. Extension officers are not only as disseminators of technology and information, but are more motivators, facilitators, and consultants for farmers (Tjitropranoto 2003; Subejo 2009). Lippitt et al. (1958) and Rogers (2003) added, extension workers must be able to diagnose problems faced by clients (farmers), build and maintain relationships with clients, strengthen adoption, and prevent termination.

D. CONCLUSION

The conditions for extension activities in the two districts were low for all measured aspects, namely: intensity of extension, suitability of materials, suitability of methods, and capacity of extension personnel.

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