

International Aid Ideologies and Policies in the Urban Sector

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What Benefits Does the Community Derive From a Foreign Aid Donated to Indonesia?

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Foreign aids in Indonesia

Foreign aid as its name denotes is supposed to improve mostly developing countries to a better condition. For donors themselves, the motivation is a combination of humanity and a more self-interested concern. The allocation of aid has often been influenced by the strategic interests of donors. For example in the long-term objective their economic and political security would benefit if poor countries develop. According to World Bank, bilateral aid has favoured former colonies and political partner more than open economies or democracies, such as Japan as the biggest donor and investor country for Indonesia. Foreign aid played an important role for Indonesia in the 1970s in all sectors; from the agricultural innovations to contribution ideas about development policy, and finance to support an expansion of public services. Through the financial crisis of the late 1990s Indonesia became a heavily aid-dependent country.¹ The World Bank, ADB and IMF played an important role in implementing multilateral aid projects and in setting the economic agenda in Indonesia (Kurnya, 2001).

Although all supported projects principally must have characteristics related to donors. Donors have increasingly become more selective in allocation of aid to those countries with records of 'good' policies and are attaching conditions on policy reforms and improving governance. Which projects are accomplished in Indonesia, of course they have to pursue after Indonesian national development planning. From the point of Indonesian government foreign assistance has to ensure that foreign funded programmes are complementary and supportive to the government's effort, such as creating a safe and peaceful Indonesia, developing justice and a democratic environment, and enhancing people's welfare and prosperity.

Appropriate to the donors' strategy, the Indonesian government within the realms of development aid will utilise foreign assistance primarily to: 1) Generate job opportunities and ensure that labour market demand is sufficient, to provide rising real wages, 2) Increase economic growth, encouraging especially private sector investment, 3) Alleviate poverty and enhance the quality of human resources – especially through education and health services to reduce the human burden of poverty and to empower individuals to rise out of poverty (Indrawati, 2005, Chowdhury and Sugema, 2005).

Impacts of Foreign Aids in Macroeconomic and Critics to Indonesia Dealing with Them

¹ More about a history of aid flows to Indonesia and a history of the economy of Indonesia see A. Chowdhury and I. Sugema, 2005, *How Significant and Effective has Foreign Aid to Indonesia been?*, Discussion Paper No. 0505, Centre for International Economic Studies (CIES), University of Adelaide Australia, www.adelaide.edu.au/cies/paper/0505.pdf, 11 July 2006 and Thee Kian Wie, 2004, *Pembangunan, Kebebasan dan 'Mukjizat' Orde Baru – Esai-esai* (Development, Freedom and 'Miracle' of New Order – Essays), Kompas, Jakarta, 35-170

Foreign aid projects are not merely related directly to concerned objectives or to the process of how to organise and to utilise, but also having influence beyond the projects themselves, such as macroeconomic. The flow of foreign aid and its certainty have contributed to macroeconomic stability. To the extent that macroeconomic stability contributed to economic growth and poverty reduction, foreign aid played a very useful role. The project aids are both in the infrastructure sectors, such as mining, energy and transport, and in pro-poor public sectors, i.e. public health, basic education, water and sanitation, public housing, and social security.

During the economic crisis foreign aid has been crucial in maintaining public social sector expenditure, which has a significant relationship with poverty reduction. But the allocation of foreign aid to pro-poor public sectors has been low compared with the amount allocated to infrastructure projects. Most grants were not recorded systematically and did not require budgetary appropriation. Donors dealt directly with the executing agencies or line ministries who did not normally report to the ministry of finance. This suited donors as they could minimise bureaucratic controls and pursue their own objectives. This type of implementation results in an unorganised and unsuccessful bias. But it also meant a lack of instruments for proper monitoring leading to a lack of accountability which give rise to corruption. The dominance of infrastructure in aid allocation and almost unqualified aid flows regardless of poor governance and institutions may have contributed to the unprecedented rise in corruption as well, to place Indonesia at the top of the list of most corrupt countries in Asia. In 2005 Indonesia was the fourth corrupted country in the world (discussions with Hari, 2006 and Chowdhury and Sugema, 2005).

When Indonesia was hit by a deep economy crisis, many critics from academic circles and observers accused that multilateral aid such as IMF, World Bank and USAID (United States Agency for International Development) push Indonesia down deeper in foreign debts and inflation. They criticised Indonesia becoming a subordinate of global economy and realising market liberalisation. Those organisations are also criticised sharply, if they are connected to political aspect. Rather than focusing only on macroeconomic management, IMF restored investor confidence. Instead of helping, the international organisations like IMF and World Bank worsen the economical situation through i.e. even higher unemployment, riots, bankruptcy of national and private economy.

After more than 30 years of engagement with donors, Indonesia has not been able to reduce its dependency on foreign aid. Indonesia in almost all difficult circumstances had to seek foreign assistance. The easy access to foreign assistance and the certainty of aid flows made the Soeharto regime lazy and it was negligent in its revenue efforts. A widely held perception is that the cosy relationship between donors and the New Order regime hid major failures of assistance programmes in Indonesia. By dealing with aid as revenue in the government budget, the regime could hide the fiscal deficit and stayed profligate. Thus, while the household sector was saving at a fantastic rate, the government was in fact dissaving under the disguise of fictitious achieved balanced budgets, made possible by high inflows of aid treated as revenue (Sugema and Chowdhury, 2005).

Aid helped Indonesia get over the crises and prevent humanitarian disasters. After the economic crisis in 1997 the aid share of education, health and social welfare sector increased significantly and that helped cushion the poor to some extent from the adverse impacts of the crisis. The share of regional development increased as well; it refers to decentralisation process. But in sum, although Indonesia received significant donor supports since the late 1960s, there remains considerable doubt about the impact of foreign aid. Indonesia's past growth and transformation owe much more to its domestic savings efforts than to foreign aid. The Indonesian discussion of aid effectiveness hardly involved broader macroeconomic issues

such as the relationships between aid and economic growth, between aid and investment. The willingness of donors to lend, and generally positive remarks by donor agencies about the Indonesian economy hid the problems associated with the lack of participation by civil society, accountability and corrupt use of money. Thus, aid was instrumental in 'helping bad government survive' and 'created more problems than it solved' (Chowdhury and Sugema, 2005).

Why Foreign Aids Does not Reduce Poverty? Allegation of International Aids

According to the Indonesian named Sjaifudian (2005) international aid fosters opportunism and creates socio-economic disparities leading to poverty, and conflict between NGO activities. It has spawned a new 'mafia', encouraging corruption and tempting local organisations to abandon their principles in an effort to secure foreign funding. The incentives offered by international organisations (study, travel abroad and networking opportunities) did not tend to be oriented to the organisation or the communities it serves, but to the individual; connected to financial gain. Local activists (as recipient) communicate with foreign donors who are treated as potential patrons. This encourages the outsiders to behave in an even more paternalistic manner. Those activists live a lifestyle creating deeply rooted jealousies and undermine social solidarity within the NGO community. Donors have a lot of power when it comes to deciding who gets to participate in their programmes. The way of corruption inside either government organisations or NGOs develops mistrust among civil society of both foreign aid and the local organisations. Further it encouraged conflicts, especially among NGOs at the local level (Sjaifudian, 2005 and discussion with Hari, 2006).²

Critic about foreign aid does not only come from recipient societies, but also from the donor ones, such as a statement from Bovard (1986). According to him foreign aid programmes have been perpetuated and expanded not because they have succeeded, but because giving foreign aid still seems like a good idea. Yet, instead of breaking the 'endless cycle of poverty', foreign aid has become the opiate of the recipient countries, mostly developing ones. Instead of relying on themselves for development, foreign aids have encouraged the governments in developing countries to be dependent on charity. Besides, similar to the statement of Sjaifudian (2005), foreign aid has made life more pleasant and entertaining for government bureaucrats in poor countries. Bovard even criticised that American foreign aid has often harmed the Third World poor. In agriculture, in economic planning, in food assistance, U.S. foreign aid has routinely failed to benefit the foreign poor. On the contrary: abandoned roads, a growing phalanx of corrupt, meddling, and overpaid bureaucrats. For example in Indonesia, the government confiscated subsistence farmers' meagre plots for AID-financed irrigation canals. Farmers did not receive compensation for land seized by the government for canal construction. The levees were broken and flood-control structures were blocked with industrial waste before the project has finished.

Another critic about international aids is a misuse of (especially big) international aid groups as 'an advertising' of donor countries. They receive budgets from the representative governments. So, it sounds naturally if the groups highlight a brand name of their country with labels on equipment and property. People have to know where supplies and equipment come from; branding is important. Yet, it can raise security issues for the aid workers in local areas of the recipient country, like Aceh, where the donor country has an unpopular reputation for some groups, such as anti western sentimentalism. In matter of a political game guiding controlling of foreigner to domestic country must be hindered. Therefore, international aid

² Doubt of foreign aid which does not reduce poverty was voiced up as well by Indonesian-Indian Students based on religious perspective (www.-mail-archive.com/ppi@freelists.org/msg17238.html).

workers should not stay too long and take control over the recipient country. The assisted country has to take back control of the people own responsibility.

Is International Aid Concerning Humanitarian Programmes Redundant and Creating Dependency? Case: Ambon (Molluccas) and Aceh

If we observe types of relief programmes, there is a typical manner of programmes initiated and organised by international donor institutions. They are certainly aimed at improvement of the destroyed location and economy recovery. In the form of food relief, building of infrastructure and facilities, like potable water provision and school building. Other humanitarian programmes are for instance counselling trauma centre for children because of disaster, a health care centre for women and children, a community empowerment programme, or a gender development programme. A conflict resolution programme was also developed through training and workshop for local community to impede conflict. Many humanitarian agencies came to Moluccas and the Aceh to accomplish such programmes.

Are these programmes appropriate to their purpose or on the contrary drive communities to dependency? From the experience of 'Conflict in Ambon' humanitarian programmes controls the community. No control from donor agencies of purposing and exploiting the financial donation causes dependency of the people. The international aid can 'spoil' and make the community lazy. Ongoing food supply for example generates people's dependency. They lost motivation to working. Continuing food supply is given for instance by UNDP (United Nation Development Programme), OXFAM (Oxford Committee for Famine Relief) and Dutch government. This situation also happened in Aceh.

Moreover the pattern of production was now changed and dominated by the pattern of consumerism. The economic power of the community and local government deteriorated further. The international aid has a tendency to harm local economy and also neighbour regions. Donors overflow them with basic goods. The impact is that selling price of local goods decreased and the local producers went bankrupt. They are not able to compete against donated goods.

Natural disasters in Indonesia especially the Tsunami in Aceh, called government pledges and public appeals from many developed countries to raising millions of dollars for help. Yet, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the figures look much higher than they really are. A lot of the money will be taken over either by the military or from existing loans. Instead of loans the emergency aid should be in the form of grants. Besides, after massive destruction the creditors should either relieve debts or arrange a 'debt for development'³. Through disasters the international debts for Indonesia will increase in the middle and long term; instead of grants U\$ 500 Mio. to U\$1.7 Billion Dollar of the total of CGI are loans. This impacts increasingly Indonesian debt and boost a higher level of poverty.

The humanitarian aids control society's life. The high dependency of community on the donation causes them to lose their autonomy to decide by themselves. The out pouring donations are perpetual sources for the local government, NGOs, society organisations, and even individuals. For example billions of funds were corrupted by the local government based on health and humanitarian funding. Amounts of medicines that should be given for free were traded in. Worse is that the corrupted relief was exploited to sponsor conflict. The 'Dependent

³ 'Debt for development' would be proposed from the German NGO Pro Regenwald. A percentage of the debt would be channelled into funds controlled or administered by NGO and/or social movements. Due to this, poor community having no access to funds is available to develop small-scale activities.

Theory' was proven that dependency of recipient country to donor is a kind of neo-imperialism, which is leading to poverty.⁴

The above conditions show us that completed humanitarian programmes were not able to improve life conditions. Failures of the programmes led to the destruction of a democracy process among the community. Instead of solving the problems other more problems rose to the surface. The reason is those kind of humanitarian agencies, both domestic and foreign ones, are demanding, overlapping and are dominated by the will of donor countries. Some agencies built similar programmes because **they** think such programmes are urgent. The programmes are definitely important. But, if it is too much, they become redundant. They decided whether a programme was able to be accomplished or not in one location. They did not analyse further about the needs of the local community. The donor agencies indeed determined which programme was appropriate for the community and realised it fast. The authoritarian manners of the agencies repressed the right of the local community to organise itself and to voice its mind. For example, delivery of food assistance was based on which goods had to be taken out from storage. In fact, the community did not need the kind of goods yet. The impact, some regions were overloaded by goods, while others lacked it. Another case of humanitarian agency is to build housing for the victims without asking their participation. This agency together with the local municipal of Ambon determined location and design of houses. They did not inquire whether the community wanted to return to the former area and to live there. This problem also occurred as well in Aceh. Many infrastructures decayed because they were built without being used or abandoned by the community. Moreover, there was no maintenance from the agency. Yet, other locations needed such infrastructure but they were left out of the humanitarian programmes. Another weakness of humanitarian agencies is instead of controlling distribution of funds and goods they are looking for new funds to achieve other programmes (Setyosiswanto, 2002 and discussions with Sukamdi and von Berchem, 2006).

Humanitarian Aid Can Create Follow-up New Problems

Many factors are interrelated to face donor agencies and it does need time as well; either as humanitarian aids (particularly middle and long term) or development aids. Foreign aid having a tendency to harm instead of helping community and further decline macroeconomic has to be avoided. For example, shortly after Tsunami in Aceh quickest and cheapest source of timber for future housing and development was needed. As a source of timber was Aceh's Gunung Leuser National Park. The Park was declared a World Heritage Site last year by UNESCO because of its unique biodiversity value. Tragedy in the form of landslides, flooding and forests burning that develops to a policy problem, such as causing tens of millions of dollars in losses to state revenues, and a tense atmosphere with the neighbour countries must not be repeated. A new road construction because of the destroyed road by the earthquake and Tsunami waves should be considered properly. The future transport infrastructure should not serve the interests of logging networks in protected areas. The Trans-Aceh 'Ladia Galaska' was requested funding from the World Bank can create profits for certain wood industries, and parallel with it becoming a potential trigger to destroy the ecosystem of the conservation area (Down to Earth, March 2005).

'Abuse' of aids causing losses both on local and national levels' is an accusation citing that international aids intend to impede instead of to aid. The image is worse if a donor is a big institution such as World Bank or IMF. In Indonesia both institutions promoted much in

⁴ Poverty according to Dependent Theory is established by dependency of marginal countries (normally developing countries) to central countries (developed countries). For more details see Budiman, 1996.

privatisation, economic liberalisation and directing infrastructure development towards energy and transportation mega-projects. The large projects marginalised community-based projects and channelled reconstruction funding to foreign companies (Down to Earth, August 2001).

Roles of NGOs

In some places in Aceh the use of aids were neither transparent, nor distributed well. In other places, in acquiring a humanitarian aid local community had to face a complicated bureaucracy that they were not prepared for. The people lost everything through the Tsunami disaster, had trauma and were in need of help immediately. But, still the local government executed obligatory transparency and good governance in organising aids in order to avoid being accused of corruption. Non-transparency among the government, local and international agencies is expected to be managed by role of NGOs (discussions with Sukamdi and Hari, 2006).

By the latter half of the 1980s, international donor organisations cooperated more with NGOs. NGOs has played strategic role in the promotion and monitoring of primary stakeholder participation in many bilateral and multilateral donor agencies. Many NGOs were small, flexible and working directly with poor communities. Weaknesses of the NGOs are the government can not monitor them. Which motives of donation which are often unknown. It can cause overlapping with government's programmes. Finally it confuses community. Scepticism and jealousy are able to emerge from another community who does not get any assistance. Further foreign aids organised by a foreign NGO in collaboration with a local one is suspected as to fool and to generate poverty, or to create dependency.

'Connection cooperation' between a local and an international NGO in Indonesia is often affected by a kind of hierarchy. Big NGOs take to control small NGOs.⁵ Delivering funding from foreign NGOs through local NGOs can provoke distrust that local NGOs having wide networking are a sort of donor's target.⁶ This practice creates an oligarchy among NGOs with serious implications for decision making processes and funding distributions within a community.

NGOs tend to pluralize world politics by calling attention to issues that governments prefer to ignore and by acting as pressure groups across borders. They serve as antidotes to traditional government bureaucracies. Conflicts between NGOs and the government should be avoided, build partnership. If NGOs advertise a democracy issue, a human rights issue, and a good governance issues, it will influence government stability. Meanwhile, it must be careful as well of overseas NGOs, which maybe take advantage and control and dominate the domestic NGOs.

Roles of the Community

Aid programmes without participation by the local community does make no sense. To know the needs of local people who are the victims of disasters, international agencies must necessarily cooperate with local organisations, be it the local municipal or a community-based organisation to know what the people need. A knowledgel of the institution or agency executing what programme is essential. Trust and good intentions from both donor and recipient agencies should be directed straight to a better condition and recovery of the

⁵ In Indonesia NGOs are classified into BINGOs (Big NGOs), MINGOs (Middle NGOs), LINGO (Little NGOs), or GONGO (Government NGOs). More detail about the classification of NGOs see B. Kerstan and J. Berninghausen, 1991, *Emanzipation Wohin?: Frauen und Selbsthilfe in Java, Indonesien (Emancipation Where?: Women and Selfhelp in Java, Indonesia)*, Verl. für Interkulturelle Kommunikation, Frankfurt/M, pp. 250

⁶ Many foreign NGOs give their aid directly to the local NGOs, because it is unbureaucratic and the aid can be utilised directly by the community.

community, which is certainly what the community need. In a complex area such as Aceh, where besides the natural disaster of Tsunami people have to face conflict with GAM (Independent Acehese Movement), a project called 'Do No Harm Project'⁷ is implemented.

Yet, all the methods were useless, unless the local people participate; to let them voice their opinions, needs and doing based on their capacities. The community must have a chance to build their self-confidence their own way and own method. Absolutely ignoring the community is wrong, but to let local community decide its needs is incorrect as well. Hundred percent bottom-up approaches will not be able to work well, nor top-down ones. A balance between participation of the community and assistance from the aid agencies is a better alternative to achieve a programme or working project.

A networking among international and domestic agencies and a data bank, such as a clearing house, about the relief programmes and projects in assisted areas could be necessary. Through the networking and a kind of clearing house each agencies, both international and domestic ones, is firstly able to investigate which programmes already exist in which area. Thus, superfluous and overlapping projects in a certain area can be prevented. Instead similar programmes can be relocated to another area. Control agencies are needed to control the flow of foreign aids. They originate either from government agencies, NGO, mass media, or other institutions. Still, such kind of agencies has weaknesses and they accuse each other. Public participation should be part in controlling foreign aids.

Some Concepts to Derive Benefits from Foreign Aids

Programmes involving local people, which are supported by foreign aid and normally cooperating with local agencies, should be examined further, whether the community does participate or not. Middle-term strategies in humanitarian aids have to be achieved through participation of local people. In Aceh for example USAID and CHF International (Cooperative Housing Foundation) joint venture with BRR (Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency)⁸ organised Community Resettlement Committee (CRC) planned 1.000 houses to resettle survivors of the Tsunami in 2004. A Community Resettlement Committee (CRC) comprised of local villagers who participated to design the homes and will work to ensure transparency during the implementation of the project. Meanwhile it was also reported that another housing reconstruction programme did not involve local community. The reconstruction of housing in the post-Tsunami with OXFAM was neglected because it was inappropriate with the local culture (discussions with Hari and Sukamdi, 2006). Community participation involves i.e. consultation with community, awareness of social culture of local people and accomplishment of environment impact analysis. Exclusion of community participation, but involvement of military to control the people forces them under pressure.⁹ Hence, we have to be cautious in considering reports about projects supported by international aids.

⁷ Do No Harm helps in handling the complexity of the conflict areas. It helps aid workers deal with the real complexities of providing assistance in conflicts with less frustration and more clarity, but better outcomes for the concerned community. See more detail on Collaborative Learning Projects, 2004, *The Do No Harm Handbook – the framework for analyzing the impact of assistance on conflict*, www.cdainc.com/dnh/docs/DoNoHarmHandbook.pdf, 03 August 2006

⁸ BRR has been established as a coordinating agency to ensure transparency, accountability, and speed in the reconstruction of Aceh and Nias. More detail about BRR see <http://www.e-aceh-nias.org/>, 04 August 2006

⁹ Compare articles between 'USAID Meletakkan Batu Pertama untuk Program Perumahan di Sepanjang Pantai Barat Aceh (USAID Breaks Ground on Housing Programme Along the West Coast of Aceh)', 19 January 2006, www.usembassyjakarta.org/bhs/siaran-pers/USAID-perumahan.html, 20 July 2006' with 'Diperlukan Rekonstruksi Berbasis Komunitas (Community-centred Reconstruction Needed)', March 2005, Down to Earth No. 64, <http://dte.gn.apc.org/64irc.htm>, 20 July 2006

Long-term aid strategies either as humanitarian aid or development aid need to develop supported partners i.e. community groups to improve their life condition but also being self-reliant and having responsibility to themselves. A programme appropriately called a local microfinance. Micro credit is needed as a start up capital. Poor women have often difficulties to obtain a credit at an ordinary bank without security. Through a 'Grameen Model' for instance¹⁰ they are able to join in the microfinance activity.

To prepare the local people to be involved in a project such as a microfinance programme, a concept like the CAP (Community Action Plan)¹¹ for example can be implemented such as what is being done by GTZ (German Agency for Technical Cooperation). Another concept namely the ABCD Concept (Asset Based Community Development)¹² is applied to explore and mobilise community asset by itself.

Yet, either middle or long-term strategy projects participating and enabling local people shall not just be a concept. Enablement is not limited to only deciding a priority for the community. Both the international and local agencies can learn from previous failures and experiences. The former mistakes shall not be hidden but shared and discussed, and used as opportunities for learning. Community should be key actors in aid programmes. Capacity building of the community must be strengthened. All agencies including the government's should recognise their capacities, competencies and rights to influence priorities and manage processes (Satterthwaite, 2002).

On the macro level, the most important thing in transferring aids to a community within the scope of poverty alleviation is not how much aid there is, or how much the foreign community spends, but how well its services are provided. For doing that, as an archipelago, it will be required in Indonesia to build strong governance both at the national and local levels, where decentralisation functions well, to ensure effective public service delegation, and more effective delivery to the poor. Therefore coordination is important, especially at the local level – coordination among each external funding and government agencies and between them. The local agencies shall not concern themselves on prioritising donor interests. The criteria formulated for potential problems should be anticipated by both parties. Policy issues must also be reviewed more consistently by Indonesian experts, to ensure actions have both relevance and impact within an Indonesian context. Monitoring, evaluation, and continuing dialogue between the Indonesian government and the international community have to take place. Appropriate standards should be set by the Indonesian government, such as no tolerance against corruption, good governance and poverty reduction.

Conclusion

Is international aid able to manifest social justice¹³ in developing countries like Indonesia? Developing countries is defined as countries, which have lack of capital and technology.

¹⁰ More details about microfinance and Grameen Programme as a recovery programme in Banda Aceh see: Meeting Minutes About Microfinance from 16 September 2005 and 06 January 2006, LRWG (Livelihoods Recovery Working Group), www.humanitarianinfo.org/sumatra/reliefrecover/livelihood/docs/minutes/NotulenRapatLivelihoods-160905,Hibah,Pinjaman&Grameen.pdf and www.humanitarianinfo.org/sumatra/reliefrecover/livelihood/docs/minutes/LRWGMinutes06Jan06-MF&RevolvingFunds-060106.pdf, 07 August 2006

¹¹ For more detail information about CAP see: UNCHS (Habitat), 1993, *The Urban Poor as Agents of Development – Community Action Planning in Sri Lanka*, Nairobi

¹² More about ABCD Concept see: *About ABCD and the Workshop*, www.synergos.org/abcd2002/#facilitators, *From Clients to Citizens: Asset-Based Community Development as a Strategy For Community-Driven Development*, www.stfx.ca/institutes/text/about_publications_occasional_citizens.html, *Situating Asset-Based Community Development in the International Development Context*, www.stfx.ca/institutes/coady/text/about_publications_new_situating.html, 26 June 2006

¹³ About social justice see F. Magnis-Suseno, 1995, *Kuasa dan Moral (Authority and Moral)*, PT Gramedia, Jakarta, pp.43-58

Developed countries assist them, so that developing countries are dependent on fund, technology, know-how, and trade. This benefits industrial countries as the stronger party. According to Jhunjhunwala aid strengthens inequality. Aid means that the people 'down there' need humanitarian assistance. The poor countries show that they are indeed poor. On the contrary, the fact is poor countries have most of the natural resources of the world. It means rich countries are more dependent upon poor countries rather vice-versa (Jhunjhunwala, 2002).

Therefore to solve the problem of strong dependency on international aid and poverty empowerment of people's self-reliance is essential. It sounds utopian for Indonesia with its strong hierarchy in authority, a country where the disparity between rich and poor is extreme, and as a foremost corrupt country in the world. In the rungs on the Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969) people empowerment, where partnership, delegated power, and citizen control belong to, stays at the topmost rungs. Hence, how to achieve social justice? Social justice can be achieved if power structures in civil society, either in political, economy, social, culture, and ideology are changed (Magnis-Suseno, 1995). Yet, change need not start in the macro level but can begin in the lowest level namely local community; step by step, even from a small part – through our contribution as researchers.

What could we do as member of N-AERUS concerning international aid projects? As European researchers perhaps we are expected to do research and develop several concepts to support a project aid in developing countries. As academicians involved in the project we may gain many things, either information or data for our research. Later we can publish the project result and 'announce' to the public our excellent invention and concepts in developing countries respectively.

Yet, mutualism partnership should occur by tutoring the local people to understand and to be self-assured in dealing with the project. It will be not correct and unfair if, as researchers, we just exploit data and information from the people only to enrich our knowledge and leave them in their unsolved problem or unsustainable project. The concept from the West should be able to be applied in developing countries. The people should understand how the project process functions. Let them do it with their own assets and capacities, but also educate them to organise themselves and to develop their sense of belonging and responsibility of the project.

Do not to change habits of a recipient country so that it creates a dependency. Do not give them an impression tending to be 'Western-centralised' particularly in education, information and technology. To keep and to maintain local potentials and local culture does not mean to be isolated from modernisation or the Western. A balance between bottom-up (recipient country) and top-down (donor country) should be accomplished; there must be a proportional take and give. Participation from all actors an 'inside/outside strategy' can be implemented. Local academics, local NGOs or local government should work hand-in-hand with outsiders from donor agencies, Northern NGOs or European universities. Both the Southern and Northern parties may reciprocally benefit each other from their experience and support.

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