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Engendering Mining Advocacy Work in Kalimantan : Challenges, Conflicts and Opportunities

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Background : Resource Exploitation in Kalimantan

Kalimantan is one of the richest region in Indonesia, in terms of natural resources. Almost all forms of extractive resources can be found in Kalimantan, therefore extractive industries have coloured the mainstream of industrialization in Kalimantan for the last three decades. Unfortunately, those kind of resource exploitation industries, mainly logging, mining and plantation have also put enormous burden to the environment and indigenous peoples of Kalimantan. The environmental destruction which has been caused by those industries had successfully created one of the biggest environmental disaster on earth in 1997 --- Indonesia forest fires, the largest forest fires have ever been seen in the world's history --- with Kalimantan as the worst affected area.

Mining industries, together with logging and plantation companies have taken millions of hectares of customary lands of the Dayak, the indigenous peoples of Kalimantan. Along with their investment --- fully supported by the bureaucratic-authoritarian regime of Soeharto and now Habibie ---- they also brought various types of human rights violations, inside and throughout the surrounding of their concession areas. Waste of mining industries, in form of tailings, acid mine-drainage, and overburden have polluted many rivers flowing through thousands of indigenous villages in Kalimantan. In many forms, the mining industries have impoverished hundreds of thousands of the Dayak, who have already been cornered for more than three decades by the New Order regime of Soeharto.

The situation of indigenous people in Kalimantan is getting worse during the economic crisis which has been taking place in Indonesia for the last two years. On one side the indigenous communities in the interior of Kalimantan have to face continuously increasing prices of their basic commodities, and very often also decreasing amount of supply which creates grave scarcity of basic necessities. On the other side the Government of Indonesia, as part of their effort to overcome the economic crisis, has encouraged foreign direct investment in the extractive sector to bring and invest more money to Indonesia. With a simple logic it means more and more expropriation of land in Indonesia, obviously in Kalimantan.

The policy, which is supported by several letters of intent with IMF, can be seen will create more devastating impacts to the people and environment of Kalimantan. It will exarcebate the present environmental destruction, caused by hundreds of logging companies, hundreds of mining concession areas (around 70 % of them are Australian or have Australian as their shareholders), and hundreds of plantation companies which practice land clearing through the cheapest way, slash and burn techniques.

With full support from the Government, both national and local, as well as from the Armed Forces, resource exploitation and all of its impacts in Kalimantan can actually be classified as environmental rape. Along with it, the rights of the indigenous people of Kalimantan, men and women, have also been raped, economically, politically, socially and even culturally. The anger of the Dayak has been expressed in many ways, peacefully and violently. Many peaceful actions, protests, and demonstrations have been performed in the capitals of the four provinces in Kalimantan, as well as in Jakarta, the national capital of Indonesia. Camp burnings, ambushes and raids have also been staged by the Dayak in various places in the interior of Kalimantan.

Unless substantial changes at the policy level and its implementation occur, the future of the environment and the indigenous people of Kalimantan will be very grim and dark. The brinks of the third wave of mining boom in Kalimantan (the first in 1987-88, the second in mid 90es) have placed the the existence of indigenous people in Kalimantan along with their environment in a very difficult position, whether to fight fiercely as they ancestors did in the colonial era or surrender and swallowed by the greediness of the mining companies.

The Advocacy Work

However, not all are sad stories. Since 1995 some non-governmental organisations in Kalimantan, together with some indigenous communities had started to organise mining advocacy work in different parts of Kalimantan. Those initiatives were supported from the very beginning by Walhi, the largest environmental NGO in Indonesia, and by CAA. In 1995, WALHI with a local NGO in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, supported by CAA, organised a national workshop on mining advocacy. Around 30 NGOs from all over Indonesia attended the workshop and a general strategy of mining advocacy was agreed.

Since then mining advocacy work in Kalimantan had started to build its format and shape. However, until almost one and half year after the workshop, the local NGOs were still doing their advocacy work sporadically. A study on Australian mining companies operation and its impacts in Kalimantan, which was conducted by the mining network in 1996-1997, marked a starting point in which the NGOs and communities was trying to develop their common advocacy agenda.

For the last two and half years, Walhi and CAA "Indonesia Field Office" (later formally changed to Yayasan PIKUL) have been helping the network to build their capacity to conduct their ground work. Institutional support, as well as program support have been channelled by CAA to the network members in the three out of four provinces in Kalimantan (until now West Kalimantan has not yet joined the network). Assistance in forms of trainings, workshops, research assistance, consultation have also been given to the network in Kalimantan.

Quite significant achievements have been produced during the last two years. The three organisations in the three provinces (YBSD in Central Kalimantan, Walhi Kalsel in South Kalimantan and JATAM Samarinda in East Kalimantan) have managed to enhance their community organising and advocacy capacity. They managed to create community organisers in the villages as well as establishing community organisations. They are now building up their capacity to influence provincial policies and practices on mining exploitation. In some areas they are helping people (the victim community of mining) to restore and build their economic resilience by setting up credit

union and cooperative. All of them are now implementing method of critical legal education, which is conducted through village meetings within and in the surrounding of the concession areas.

The ground work in Kalimantan has been linked from the very beginning with the national mining campaign which is aimed to change the national mining policy. The national campaign, which CAA also supporting, to some extent has managed to create a space for dialogue and negotiations with the Ministry of Mines and Energy. Strengthened with campaign on particular mining cases, the chance and opportunities to bring substantial and meaningful changes are actually quite significant in the next several months, mainly caused by the intention of the ministry officials at the moment to produce popular and accomodative policies in this euphoria of reformation. However, the ministry also has to face and accomodate pressures from the national government and IMF to create more conducive environment for foreign mining investment, as one main means of getting foreign currency for the national economy. The big question for the network now is whether they will be able to produce comprehensive and strong policy recommendations, which is pro people and environment, to influence the policy-making processes in the ministry.

Indonesia Mining Campaign in Australia

To strengthen the advocacy work in Kalimantan, CAA decided to conduct an Indonesia Mining Campaign in Australia since early 1998. At the moment the campaign is targeted on two mining companies, Rio Tinto, which operates in East Kalimantan and Aurora Gold, which operates in Central Kalimantan. The campaign was started with preparation stages, which were conducted during the second half of 1997. It was mainly to strengthen the capacity of our local partners in the two provinces.

In September 1997, the preparation work was intensified, marked by a visit by PPE to conduct a filming trip to Upper Mahakam area (interior of East Kalimantan which the mining area of Rio Tinto is located). Another trip was also planned to be conducted in Murung Raya area (location of Aurora Gold mining in Central Kalimantan), but got cancelled for security reasons. Four months later the second filming trip was conducted in Central Kalimantan, which one of the purposes was also to bring a woman (victim of the mining operations of the company) to Australia to present her case on mining and its impacts to the life of indigenous Dayak women in Central Kalimantan. Her visit was actually meant to be a significant part of a four week campaign tour in six states of Australia in February 1998. The campaign tour was quite succesful. It managed to force the two companies to agree to start negotiation processes.

The filming trip and the campaign tour were done, and it was quite succesful. However, it failed to bring Ibu Satariyah, the woman to Australia. The intention of CAA, based on gender considerations which implicated the needs to have woman participation in the campaign, had failed to meet the real objective situation in the field. This failure will be discussed later in another part of this paper.

Another Attempt : Asia Pacific Mining Skillshare

Two months after the campaign tour, an event which was titled Mining Advocacy Skillshare was held in the Philippines. The Skillshare was meant to be a venue for mining advocacy activists to increase their capacity and skills. CAA supported 4 activists from Kalimantan and WALHI to attend

the meeting. 3 of these four activists were women, two of them were NGO activists and the other one was a community organiser from Central Kalimantan.

At the moment the two NGO female activists' roles are quite significant within the network. The Jakarta activist is gradually increasing her capacity as she is now the mining advocacy program officer in WALHI. The other one is now playing significant role in the NGO network in East Kalimantan. However, the female community organiser in Central Kalimantan is still struggling to find her role in the local advocacy in her home villages. She can not yet find sufficient support from her environment to actually play her roles within the organising work in her area, and she also doesn't get much support from the local NGO in the area.

The women situation and gender work

As always, women situation is worse than men. With the mining conflicts there is no exception, women are victim from both sides, the mining company's and government's side as well as from the people's side. Women experience double burden, they have to earn money by working in the community's traditional mine sites, in the forests and gardens, as well as at home doing domestic job. They have to face unhealthy environment on daily basis by doing small-scale mining in the polluted rivers, either panning or the mechanized ones.

They also have to face patriarchy systems within the indigenous natural resource management systems. They are not involved in the decision-making process, they almost don't have access and control to land and other resources utilization. However, within the small-scale mining activities the women have quite significant authority to use the money they can get from extracting gold.

Several types of domestic work of women are now more difficult to be implemented, caused by the environmental degradation which has been happening since the presence of the mining companies in their area. In many villages nearby water sources are heavily polluted forcing the women to walk farther than before to get water. Because of the river pollution, many children have suffered diseases, which also put more burden to the mothers.

On the other side, gender sensitivity is not yet built within the NGOs who are working on mining and natural resources issues in Kalimantan and at national level. For quite a long time resources issues were considered as male activists' issues, and the environment of the activists was a perfect picture of male activists' world. Until very recently, it was very difficult to influence that particular NGO environment with ideas of gender perspectives. However, for the last several months progressive developments towards integration of gender perspectives are occurring and increasing, primarily caused by many interactions that are happening between NGOs working in resource issues and NGOs working on women's issues.

CAA Field Office (Yayasan PIKUL) sees its role as facilitator of an awareness program to create a breakthrough which can lead to engendering the mining advocacy work in Kalimantan, as well as at the national level. As an institution which is now working on two main issues, natural resource management/indigenous people's rights and health/human rights with special focus on women's health, CAA (Yayasan PIKUL) can play significant role to bring vision, knowledge, and skills to integrate gender perspectives to the mining advocacy work. However, there is still lack of knowledge and skills within the NRM Program staff of Yayasan PIKUL.

Challenges and Conflicts

The campaign in Australia brought gender issues and perspectives to the forefront of discussions in the mining network for the first time. The needs to have women's insight to the cases which were to be brought to Australian public was the base of Oxfam Australia's request to Kalimantan NGOs to search and find a woman to be part of the delegates. On the other side, at that time there was almost none gender specific activity in the work of Kalimantan network, as well as in the national network. Nevertheless YBSD, one of the Kalimantan network member, finally agreed to look for a woman and a woman story on the mining case of Aurora Gold in Central Kalimantan.

The campaign's preparation work included a filming trip to Central Kalimantan, which was aimed to film the life of Ibu Satariyah, a woman who is one of the victims of the gold mining company. The intention at that time was to bring her story as a traditional miner, who was evicted by the big mining company activity, a company which ruins hers and her family's life since 1989. However, the needs and intention from Australia matched with the unpreparedness of the the ground work of YBSD as our main partner in the area, the community, and Ibu Satariyah herself.

Without thorough preparation, gender awareness, development framework of thought on gender issues, and women empowering program in the field, Oxfam Australia's effort to bring Ibu Satariyah's story to Australia, as a means to integrate gender perspectives to the campaign finally was met by reluctancy, resentment, and dissatisfaction by the local NGO and community. Ibu Satariyah managed to fly to Jakarta, a first time in her life she went out from her own area, but gave up to conduct further campaign preparation work in Jakarta and finally refused to go to Australia. To make it worse, her trip back to Central Kalimantan was a very humiliating event to her, since she was badly criticized by her relatives and friends over her fears and weaknesses to continue the trip.

The failure eventually led to development of tensions between Oxfam Australia field office and our partner in Kalimantan. Integration of gender perspectives in form of involvement of a woman in the campaign tour and the plan to raise Ibu Satariyah's personal story as the central story of the campaign, was seen as a forced agenda from above or from a foreign funding agency. As the result, the plan to set up a gender program within the mining advocacy program in YBSD was postponed.

Problems identified causing the failure were :

1. Lack of consultation with women and lack of women participation in the decision-making processes in the field. From the first place of the mining advocacy work the local, national NGOs and us didn't put enough energy to break the rigidity of the male activist world environment of the mining network. Almost none women NGO activist, not mentioning the women community activist, that were involved in the preparation, designing, and implementation of the advocacy programs.
2. Lack of knowledge and skills amongst the NGO activists : local, national and NRM Program of CAA Field Office, to design a gender awareness program and a system to integrate women's and gender problems and perspectives to the work. There wasn't any activist ever attended a gender training in this particular NGO environment.
3. There wasn't much space for women to raise their voices, aspirations and problems within the patriarchy structure of the indigenous communities. Women are seen, as always, as the

second class of the community; who are not supposed to be asked for opinions and advices. In spite of the inequality, in the filming trip we found several brave women, who dared to resist the mining company.

4. There wasn't any gender program at that time within the network to build gender awareness and gender perspectives.

Opportunities

Since then Oxfam Australia Field Office in Kupang has been trying quite strongly to incorporate gender perspectives into its programs as well as to its partners programs. In the field visits conducted after the campaign tour in Australia, gender issues and problems were always discussed between us and our partners. We incorporated gender considerations in the appraisal mechanisms of funding assistance of our partners. Gradually, we tried to put discussion on gender perspectives and problems at the center of regular discussions of our partners as well as their work.

That kind of development is actually strengthened by development in the field. During the last several months we have seen women courageously taking part of the people's resistance to the mining company. Field experiences such as those have made the NGOs activists and the men in the communities aware that women participation can no longer be neglected. The framework of thinking is gradually changing, and they are now seeing that gender perspectives and problems are real thing and should be addressed thoroughly.

As of our role as facilitator, we then try to implement a new approach which is to facilitate meetings between the NGO partners working on resource rights and our NGO partners working on women's health issues. Our aim is to facilitate and exchange of views, perspectives, opinions which can develop bridge between the two strategic issues.

One of the substantial starting point of this approach was the partners meeting of ours, which was held in Bali last October. We invited more than 30 NGO partners and community representatives to the meeting, to discuss the strategic plan which is to be implemented in the next two years. We designed the meeting to be influenced strongly by gender perspectives and considerations. However, we were very careful not to be seen as forcing agenda, instead we tried very much to facilitate genuine discussions and consultations between our partners from the two backgrounds. At the end of the meeting we produced a quite strong gender influenced strategic plan.

The strategic plan produce in the partners meeting was then brought to the Evaluation Workshop of Kalimantan Mining Advocacy, which was held last January. The workshop was aimed to conduct evaluation of mining advocacy work in Kalimantan in the last two and half years, and develop a workplan for Kalimantan mining advocacy network for the next two years. The workshop participants (representatives of Kalimantan network and national network) finally agreed to develop a specific women and gender programs within the network program. As the executive of the women and gender program the network agreed to establish a specific team called Mining Advocacy Women's Team (TKPT). The team, consists of women NGO activists and women community activists, was given tasks to develop and implement the program throughout the four provinces in Kalimantan. It is hoped that with this workplan, the Kalimantan mining network can effectively develop framework of thought and an internal environment that can engender the mining advocacy work in Kalimantan.