

Troubling encounters: The pursuit of human rights to water and sanitation in the face of climate change

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Presentation Outline



Research Project



Research Team



Research approach and methods



Context of climate change in Manggarai



How human rights principles can be enacted in climate change assessments



How communities are carrying out commoning practices in response to climate change



Conclusion



References



Research Project

- ▶ ISF-UTS in partnership with Yayasan Plan International Indonesia and Water Aid Timor-Leste on three year project in Indonesia and Timor-Leste
- ▶ Research resourced by the Water for Women Fund, Australian government
- ▶ Linked to Yayasan Plan International Indonesia's project that aims to support Sanitasi Total Berbasis Masyarakat (STBM) project on rural water and sanitation services, in Kabupaten Manggarai (NTT) and Sumbawa (NTT). YPII's project has a particular focus on gender and social inclusion
- ▶ Objective is to learn about climate change impacts on rural water and sanitation services and provide programming recommendations
- ▶ 1 month field work in Manggarai and in Timor-Leste; cross-learning workshop

Our Research Team

► ISF: Assoc Prof. Joanne Chong, Caitlin Leahy, Dr. Jeremy Kohlitz, Tamara Megaw, Anna Gero, Naomi Carrard

► Independent Research Consultant: Fransiska Sugi

► YPII: Hermince Brikman, Juliane Talan, Nur Aini, Piter Palaipeni, Silvia Devina, Silvia Landa, Yohanes Joman

► Plan International Australia: Lee Leong, John Kelleher



Research approach and methods

- ▶ Approach inspired by 'PAR approach'
- ▶ Qualitative research
- ▶ Approach that does not only study vulnerability, but also community strengths to respond to climate change
- ▶ Feminist approach - prioritising participation and voices of women and marginalised groups

Field research in subdistricts of

- ▶ Rahong Utara
- ▶ Cibai Barat
- ▶ Reok



Research Methods in the Field

1. *Community mapping*
2. *System mapping*
3. *WASH Accessibility Analysis*
4. *Future visioning*
5. *Focus Group Discussion*
6. *Interview*
7. *Discussion about community strengths*

Climate hazards impacting on environment (our preliminary findings)

- ▶ Seasonal variability
- ▶ Dry season is extended
- ▶ Variation in rain intensity
- ▶ Flood
- ▶ Landslide



Climate change impacts on access to water and sanitation (preliminary findings)

- ▶ The impacts of climate change affect everyone, but not everyone is affected in the same way and some people suffer more than others.
- ▶ Water scarcity may lead to people returning to open defecation, with worse consequences for women and children.
- ▶ Women traditionally manage water for their households (collecting, treating and storing water) , and so will experience more burden from climate impacts on water



Climate hazards impacting livelihoods (our preliminary findings)

- ▶ Failure to plant (example: rice paddy)
- ▶ Failure to harvest (example: rice paddy, coffee and horticulture)
- ▶ Income of farmers has decreased → migration for alternative livelihoods
- ▶ Failure to grow food for household consumption



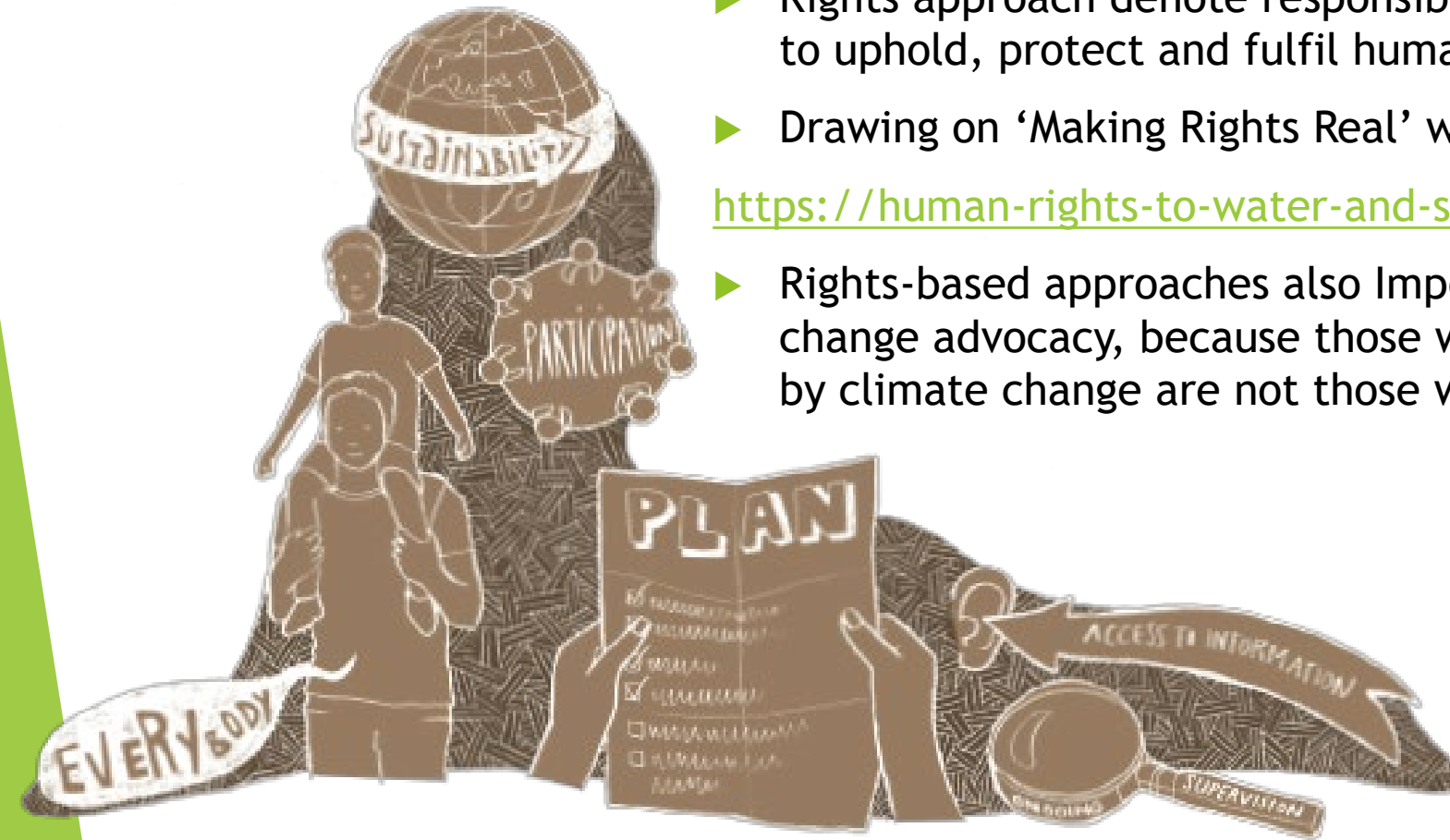


Realising human rights to water and sanitation

- ▶ UN Resolution 64/292 on 28 July 2010 explicitly recognised human right to water and sanitation
- ▶ Rights approach denote responsibilities - responsibilities to uphold, protect and fulfil human rights
- ▶ Drawing on 'Making Rights Real' work

<https://human-rights-to-water-and-sanitation.org/>.

- ▶ Rights-based approaches also Important in climate change advocacy, because those who are most affected by climate change are not those who caused it





Human Rights Principle: Equality and Non-discrimination

“All individuals are equal as human beings and by virtue of the inherent dignity of each human person. No one, therefore, should suffer discrimination on the basis of race, colour, ethnicity, gender, age, language, sexual orientation, religion, political or other opinion, national, social or geographical origin, disability, property, birth or other status as established by human rights standards.”

- ▶ Designing **inclusive** climate change assessment methods that can be integrated with existing WASH programs
- ▶ Need to do things differently to consider equal opportunity for those who are illiterate, poor, people living with disability, lower social status.
- ▶ In 3 subdistricts, inclusion of people with disabilities and older community members was valuable for learning



Human Rights Principle: Participation and Inclusion (1)

“Rights-based approaches require strong participation by communities, civil society, minorities, women, people of different ages. Local government and CSOs have a role to play in including everybody in decision-making processes, especially marginalised groups, to ensure their needs are met.”

- ▶ We found varying levels of participation of women across Manggarai.
- ▶ In Rahong Utara, 9 out of 10 women in our FGD had never been invited to or participated in community meeting.
- ▶ While in Cibal Barat, many of the women participated and felt they were listened to on community decisions about WASH. Two heads of subvillages (*kepala dusun*) were women.
- ▶ In Reok, at community level, women were not usually consulted about decisions.
- ▶ In Reok, perceptions about decision-making in household were different between men and women. Men thought they did most of the decision-making, while women thought decision-making was equally shared.
- ▶ **Strengthening participation of women in household and community level decision-making will help ensure their needs can be met, especially in extreme climate events**

Human Rights Principle: Participation and Inclusion (2)



- ▶ Community members, particularly older women and men, are aware of the changing climate and impacts on their livelihood. Need mechanisms for sharing these local knowledges with CSOs and government.
- ▶ Testing of water sources is carried out by the government, but results not usually shared with communities.
- ▶ **Community members have the right to information about safe water and sanitation services, and impact of climate change.**

Human Rights Principle: Accountability and Rule of Law

“States and other duty-bearers are answerable for the observance of human rights... Individuals, the media, civil society and the international community play important roles in holding governments accountable for their obligation to uphold human rights.”

- ▶ In our field work, we found several cases where routine maintenance of pipes and toilets was not being done, and complaints from users were not being responded to.
- ▶ There are some collectives for maintenance of WASH infrastructure (OPAM) which can be strengthened with more training and funding.
- ▶ Local governments are answerable to citizens to uphold rights to access to water and sanitation.
- ▶ CSOs and academic community support





Human Rights Principle: Interdependence and Interrelatedness

“Human rights are interdependent and interrelated. Each one contributes to the realization of a person’s human dignity through the satisfaction of his or her developmental, physical, psychological and spiritual needs. The fulfilment of one right often depends, wholly or in part, upon the fulfilment of others.”

- ▶ We found that climate change hazards can impact a range of interrelated human rights
- ▶ Access to land, food security, clean water, health, protection of biodiversity as well as having access to opportunities for learning and giving voice to own needs and opinions, are interrelated and part of ensuring human wellbeing





‘Commoning’

- ▶ Another way to see the climate is as a common property, and we all have responsibility to care and protect the earth
- ▶ Water and natural systems generally, are more than an instrumentalised resource to be commodified and managed, more than a receptacle for waste. Many indigenous people recognise intrinsic value of nature and their ties with it (Walsh, 2015, p.103; Harris, 2015, p. 158)
- ▶ **Commons can be seen as “a property, a practice, or a knowledge that is shared by a community”** (Gibson-Graham et al. 2013, p.130 in Sato & Alarcón, 2019). Commons are not reduced to resources, commons are a site of communal acts of care and responsibility
- ▶ Use Gibson-Graham’s categories of biophysical, knowledge, cultural and social commons to analyse Manggarai community approaches to commoning in conditions of climate change

Biophysical commoning

- ▶ Coffee (cash crop) and rice (cash and consumption) is no longer growing as well as before. Women and men reported they had decided to change the types of plants they were growing to adapt to a longer dry season. They changed to horticulture (for cash), bananas, cassava and corn (cash and consumption).
- ▶ To reduce erosion, communities were terracing the land.
- ▶ Communities were also replanting trees to reduce erosion in areas prone to landslides.



Knowledge commoning

- Biophysical commoning also relies on knowledge of what crops to plant and when, how to tend to the farming land and forest - knowledge shared between generations.
- Many community members had the common knowledge to plant trees (especially ara trees) around the water springs, as a way to help increase the quantity of water and protect the water quality. This was customary knowledge, but had also been spread by an information campaign by a government or CSO group.
- Women taught and learnt livelihood skills in *arisan*. Then they could diversify their livelihoods from farming into baking cakes, handloom weaving or sewing.





Cultural commoning

- Women provide collective labour to each other to manage farming and community tasks.
- With increasing water scarcity, community members (especially women) collect water for neighbours or family members who are ill, elderly or have physical disabilities that are a barrier for water access.
- Community members help each other if disasters happen, they called it *Campe cama Tau* (similar to *gotong royong*).

Social commoning

- ▶ Another part of membership of *arisan* was the savings circle - these common pool savings were used to meet children's education or family health care needs.
- ▶ Women also had a number of committees and lead social activities in the community, that strengthened their social ties and collectively care for their emotional needs.
- ▶ To deal with heavy rain, community members designed drainage canals and shelters to protect water sources/toilets.
- ▶ There are local collectives (called *OPAM*) to fix pipes, taps and other infrastructure related to water and sanitation. The *OPAM* members learn by doing. This is generally a gendered practice.





Conclusions

- ▶ Communities are adapting to political, economic and ecological changes through a range of commoning practices that are gendered and place-based.
- ▶ These practices are not free from gender and other power dynamics between men and women, and women and other women, that intersect to shape their access to and control over resources.
- ▶ Some of these practices burden women disproportionately through additional care work.
- ▶ Nonetheless commoning analysis provides a positive framing that highlights women's agency, knowledge and community strengths, instead of a normative framing of poor women as passive victims of climate change.
- ▶ Women's agency is enacted through appropriation and reinvention of available resources, practices and knowledge in ways that strengthen the wellbeing of the community.

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