

NURTURING CONNECTIONS FOR IPLC RIGHTS AND RESILIENCE

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



The
Samdhana
Institute

An Asian Center for Social and Environmental Renewal

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Cover story:

Held simultaneously in Indonesia and the Philippines, last November's Regional Youth Menoken was Samdhana's first online summit between Indigenous youth groups in Southeast Asia. The event gathered around 350 participants together through a combination of online dialogues and on-site programmes.

Photos courtesy of Youth Menoken participants.
Background image: Ciptagelar Village, West Java (photo by Andi)



A Year for Remaking Connections and Breaking Through

For many of us, the COVID pandemic became personal in 2021, as the disease impacted friends and family. With little respite and multiple spikes in cases, the journey at times felt like a rollercoaster ride. Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) were seriously affected too; in the village of Malinao in North Kalimantan, for example, 316 people were infected last July and 12 individuals sadly passed away. During these difficult times, feelings of helplessness can be just as debilitating as the disease itself. However, in every crisis there is usually a glimmer of hope; the past year provided opportunities for collaboration towards our common goals, strengthening our shared commitments and paving the way towards recovery.

2021 was a time for...

Building relationships. The pandemic situation underlined the importance of relationships; it emphasised the value of face-to-face interactions but also the importance of staying in touch by whatever means necessary. Through it all, communication was key. We continued to build stronger ties. We look forward to working more closely with the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) in 2022, as we reach out to more IPLCs together.

Learning. We increased our appreciation of communications technology in 2021. Our offices in Indonesia and the Philippines both upgraded their comms setup, launching podcasts from simple recording studios. We will continue to embrace new technologies, documenting stories of repression as they unfold, to ensure they are remembered accurately and hopefully do not reoccur. We will continue looking for new ways to work together, to share Indigenous knowledge and achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the Center for Transdisciplinary and Sustainability Sciences (CTSS) of the Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) University.

Enhancing creativity. Samdhana found new and innovative ways to engage with our partners in 2021. In the run-up to the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26), we took part in the *Fork to Farm Dialogues*, which focused on climate justice and the role of the next generation in food production. We continue working on new initiatives, such as Weaving for the Future, in collaboration with the *Prince Charles School of Oriental and Islamic Arts* and the *Philippine Women's University*.

Persevering. We supported around 350 young people from at least 18 locations across the region via the *Regional Youth Noken summit*, helping them interact and share their perspectives, their concerns and aspirations. This followed on from the local and global food dialogues organised by Samdhana and 13 partners across Southeast Asia, which involved around 160 participants and highlighted the centrality of local food producers to the *Climate Justice* movement. Samdhana will continue to persevere in 2022, to address the needs of IPLCs alongside our partners.

Recalibrating. Samdhana has adjusted its institutional targets to meet the challenges of the new normal era. Time is of the essence, so climate and gender justice work will figure more prominently than ever before in our recalibrated action plan. For these adaptive measures to work effectively, we must continue to recognise the importance of IPLCs' rights to land, sea and ancestral territories. We must also ask ourselves: how can we accelerate recognition of these issues at the local and national levels? How do we catalyse engagement and spur institutions and bureaucracies into action, to achieve our aims more quickly?

Looking ahead to 2022, we need to ensure that gender equity and social inclusion are put into practice. We must pivot away from defensive positions and create opportunities that drive positive change. To that end, we are exploring potential new partnerships on gender work, particularly with the gender studies programme (*studi kajian gender*) in the University of Indonesia's School of Strategic and Global Studies (SKSG).

As we move forward, we must remain driven by a sense of urgency. We need to seriously reconsider what actions could be game changers for the social and environmental movement in the months ahead and in the years beyond. If we are to achieve our twin aims of climate justice and gender justice, we must devise new solutions to long-standing problems. Working together at scale with our partners, we must ask ourselves difficult questions and do whatever it takes to find the answer.

Integral to this development will be the simple ethos of TLC – Tender Loving Care. All of us have a vital role to play in this journey together. We must value the unique perspectives and contributions of each individual – regardless of gender, ethnicity, experience, physical capabilities, position or status. Treating each other with dignity and respect on a personal level is just as important as meeting our targets to bring about change on a wider scale. The end does not justify the means. We must never turn a blind eye to harassment or bullying, but rather embody the principles of fairness we espouse and practice what we preach.

As we look back on 2021 and ahead to 2022, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all our partners, staff, board, fellows, volunteers, donors and everyone who supported us in 2021: *maraming salamat, terima kasih banyak, kop chai lai lai* and thank you very much. We have come through the trials and tribulations of 2021 together, in spite of the many challenges the past year has presented. Through it all, we've learned the value of having someone to lean on and someone to celebrate with.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and give thanks for the contributions of all those activists and partners who passed away during the last year. Their devotion to their communities, their heritage and the environmental movement will live on in the work we do. To continue their legacy and honour their memory, we must keep on fighting for positive change. From everyone at Samdhana, thank you.

Regards,

Suraya A. Afiff
Chairperson of the Board, Samdhana Institute

Throughout 2021, and in spite of the COVID-19 situation, the Samdhana Institute continued working to bring its vision for the future more clearly into focus. We envisage a world in which natural, cultural and spiritual diversity are valued, where Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) hold land rights for their territories and have full recourse to the rule of law. Through a combination of independent leadership and organisational support, they will be responsible for their own development and well-being. Achieving this objective is a long and complex journey, but in the past year we have made significant progress towards our vision. Here are a few key milestones we reached along the way in 2021:

The PERMATA Project is being implemented as part of a consortium including *Badan Registrasi Wilayah Adat* (BRWA), the Urban and Regional Development Institute (URDI), *Kitong Bisa, Perempuan Aman, Kaoem Telapak* and the Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN). The project aims to contribute to the recognition of rights of IPLCs living in forested landscapes, helping them live sustainably, while also deterring deforestation and forest degradation. It builds on progress from the 2016-2020 project on securing community rights, by working in new communities in seven existing districts as well as five new districts. An integrated rights and livelihoods approach will be applied in 25 communities.

Support for COVID-19 recovery and resilience building

Thanks to support from the Global Greengrants Fund (GGF) and the Ford Foundation Social Bond Fund, we have been able to extend and expand our support for IPLCs, as they struggle to withstand the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in their communities, while also helping them build resilience and spark a recovery. For the first six months of the grant-making period (July to December 2021), we provided institutional support to national and regional organisations in Southeast Asia, supported capacity development for millennial farmers in the Philippines and implemented COVID-19 recovery initiatives among IPLCs in Indonesia.

Menoken activities in Indonesia

Throughout 2021, seven *menoken* gatherings took place in Tanah Tabi, Anim Ha in Merauke; Tanah Timor in Nusa Tenggara; and Timur, Sari and Domberai in West Papua. The *menoken* event with *diffables*, dubbed '*Secangkir Koppi*', was conducted online, while approximately 840 individuals, representing IPLCs, women, youth and *diffables*, alongside government agencies, local organisations and other activist groups. Topics included local history and culture, food processing, nature and ecotourism, along with various products that communities take pride in, such as coffee, sago, essential oils from citronella and eucalyptus, *tenggiri*, coconut, virgin coconut oil (VCO), bamboo and ornamental wood processing and products, batik and others.

Recognition and protection in Jayapura, Papua

In Indonesia, the Head of Jayapura Regency, Papua Province, joined “*Menoken di Tabi*”; a community gathering and knowledge exchange event facilitated by Samdhana in coordination with various other local organisations. He was so inspired that he publicly called for the protection and development of Jayapura and Yototo Hill. The agrarian reform task force (GTMA) conducted a dialogue with the Indigenous communities of Rheapang Muaif, which confirmed both parties’ determination to pursue recognition and protection of their territory. Moving forward, the GTMA of Jayapura and the local chapter of the Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago (AMAN) in Tabi will assist and conduct the tenure rights assessment for Jayapura Regency.

Working SMARTER with local women

In September 2021, we completed a three-year project, supported by the Ford Foundation and entitled Improving the Resilience and Adaptive Capacity of Indigenous and Local Women in Facing Socio-ecological Challenges through Smart Practices (also known as ‘SMARTER’ Project). The project set out to support young people, especially women, in the Waioti and Kolisia B villages in Sikka District, Nusa Tenggara.

Young entrepreneurs underwent training that covered climate adaptive perspectives on agricultural development and technology, including drip water irrigation and productive economics business training. Several partners shared their knowledge and expertise, including the Women and Mining Work Team (TKPT); the Association of Activists for the Protection of Children’s Rights (PAPHA) in Sikka Regency NTT; the Directorate General of Regional Development; the Ministry of Home Affairs, Youth Sub-Directorate; and the Directorate General of Culture, Ministry of Education and Culture. A Field School Learning Module, compiled by the Jendela Ide Indonesia foundation in Bandung, is being disseminated to promote and protect biodiversity

and strengthen the ecosystem of cultural practices of IPLCs through a combination of guidance, protection, development, utilisation of traditional knowledge and technology. This initiative is presented in cooperation with the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture and is expected to be implemented nationwide. Support from the Ford Foundation enabled Samdhana to continue our work alongside the Mama Aleta Foundation and Pokja OAT in Mollo. In 2021, Pokja OAT successfully repaired eight traditional houses (lopo) for use by local Indigenous youths in their various activities, including tourism initiatives.

At the heart of all Samdhana initiatives is a spirit of connectivity; of nurturing relationships between peoples, places and cultures. Following another year of enforced isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this sense of community has become more important – and more pronounced – than ever before.

In 2021, we continued to work closely with groups of IPLCs, comprising local food producers, youth leaders, activists and entrepreneurs, among them leaders, women and the youth. Unperturbed by natural disasters, pandemics and environmental degradation, these groups have continued their struggle for independence, agency and recognition of their land rights.

The following collection of stories looks back on recent events, highlighting progress and areas for improvement, while also providing a source of inspiration moving forward.

#YesTheyCan
#nurturinggeneration



Gathering of Indigenous youths in Mollo, Indonesia (Samdhana/Anggit)

Submission of Map Documents of Customary Areas by YBAW and LSPK (Samdhana Partner) to the Head of the Regional Agrarian and Spatial Planning (ATR/BPN) Papua, witnessed by Deputy Minister of ATR/BPN



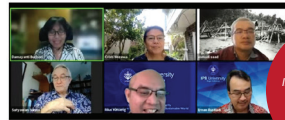
Bupati Jayapura Matus Awoltauw, trying to grind coffee manually with the menoken community



Participation in the Indonesia Pavilion COP 26 UNFCCC, Jakarta



Executive Director of The Samdhana Institute Cristi Nozawa (centre-top) at the opening of a public lecture with CTSS IPB University



Director General of Culture, Ministry of Education Hilmar Farid in a public lecture session with CTSS IPB University



Local wisdom field school in Ciptagelar village



The signing of the decree recognising the customary territory of the Tafi clan in Tambrau, West Papua



Travel with Chef Charles Toto to five villages in Jayapura Regency during the menoken events in Tabi using a food truck, which acts as a centre for local food education



Menoken Damberai in September 2021, follow by youths, women from various Indigenous communities in the Damberai area





Indigenous Youth Groups Taking Action to Protect the Forest

In the Balinese language, *Mertajati* means 'true source of life' and this is the name given to a forest (or 'alas') that surrounds Tamblingan Lake in Buleleng Regency; an area that is home to the Dalem Tamblingan Indigenous community (ADT). The Alas Mertajati supports a total of four ADT villages, namely Munduk and Gobleg, along with Gesing Village and Umejero Village, which belong to the districts of Banjar and Busungbiu, respectively.

The forest has been government property ever since the Dutch colonial era. Following independence, it was split into three categories: nature reserves (CA), protected forests and nature tourism parks (TWA). Currently, only part of the Alas Mertajati area and Lake Tamblingan are included in Tamblingan Nature Tourism Park. Although Indigenous Peoples (IP) have guarded the forest for generations, they have never been formally recognised as its custodians.

But times are changing. Since 2019, and with support from the Dedicated Grants Mechanism Indonesia (DGMI), the ADT have been working alongside the Wisnu Foundation to win Customary Forest status for the Alas Mertajati. An application has been submitted to the Ministry of Forestry and Environment that would protect the Mertajati for future generations and grant them official conservator status.

"We've lost the connection [to the forest] we inherited from our elders."

- Santi Adiyana, an ADT youth from Tamblingan



Indeed, it is the next generation of ADT members themselves who are taking the lead, with a group of 10 local youths from various ADT villages volunteering to map the forest as part of the application process. For many, like Kadek Mahardika from Gesing Village, this is their first time in the forest, and an opportunity to get to know the area better. “If I didn’t take part in the mapping, maybe I would never know Alas Mertajati,” he said.

During the mapping process, ADT youth groups gained a better understanding of their own heritage and customary values, by rediscovering their connection to the forest. “There are broken ties between the ADT community and Alas Mertajati,” explained Tut Santi Adiyana (or Tut San), who works as a farmer in Tamblingan. “That’s why our community, especially the ADT youth, know so little about the forest; [we’ve lost] the connection we inherited from our elders,” he lamented.

Today, most agrarian ADT communities rely on water from Alas Mertajati to irrigate their fields. The forest’s capacity to provide is fully appreciated by Made Sugi, an ADT youth from Gobleg Village whose father is a clove farmer in Tamblingan. However, he insists the forest has more than just a practical importance. “It is a sacred place,” he explains, referring to the many religious sites that are dotted throughout the forest.

Like a growing number of ADT youths, Made is determined to have Alas Mertajati officially recognised by the government and protected by those whose livelihoods (and cultural survival) depend on the fate of the forest. Made, like the growing number of youth activists working to protect the trees, can’t imagine a future without them. As Made himself puts it, “if we don’t preserve the forest, we may as well cut off the source our life.”

Rising in the East: Supporting the Next Generation of Leaders in NTT

On Tuesday, 24 August 2021, *menoken* activities were held for the first time in Kupang and Tanah Timor in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), Indonesia. In both locations, the events brought together community members, youth groups and local officials, to discuss plans for environmental protection. A key theme was how youths can take the lead, thereby planting the seeds of long-term community-led conservation.

“Facing the threat of environmental damage in the next 50-100 years, the children and youth of Timor today need to be prepared,” said local Regent

Korinus Masneno in his opening remarks at the event in Tanah Timor. “They must understand the threat of environmental damage and its

impact on life in the future,” he added, before noting that social support networks must also be leveraged for the good of the environment.

With that in mind, *menoken* activities have set out to nurture the younger generation’s love of nature. One place where this is evident is the Manusak Nature School in Kupang Regency, where children aged 2-5 years have been encouraged to engage with nature, while also learning how and why it must be protected. Here, students learned to plant trees, use water more sustainably and properly care for the land, during *menoken* events held over three days and attended by around 50 representatives of the local community, including children with disabilities, the *Secangkir Kopi* literacy community, *Film Kupang*, the NTT Language Ambassadors, *Rumah Mentari*, *Kopi Kaoem* and the Mama Aleta Fund Foundation.



Korinus Masneno.
(Samdhana/Anggit)



Tanah Timor *menoken* event participants (Samdhana/Anggit)

Samdhana has conceived events such as these to build solidarity and pride in traditional knowledge, while also mobilising action for positive causes. “*Menoken* activities always prioritise friendship,” explains Yahya Ado, the founder of the Beta Solusi Rumah Foundation.

“We focus on getting together, camping, cooking and eating as a group, exchanging stories and knowledge, singing and enjoying cultural arts together,” he added.

The most positive output of the events was the involvement of the young people themselves. Several young champions were identified in each location, who will now take up the challenge of building solidarity through environmentalism in their communities and friendship groups.

Following the *menoken* activities in Tanah Timor, various youth groups resolved to tackle the issues faced by their communities, including land rights in customary areas, building relationships between differently abled (*diffabled*) groups, preserving and celebrating traditional arts and supporting gender equality and the protection of children throughout Timor and Kupang. Together, and with the support of the Samdhana Institute, these youth groups represent the dawn of a brighter, greener and more united future.

Diffabled group at the Menoken event in Tanah Timor (Samdhana/Anggit)



About Noken

“Noken” is a woven fabric that’s common in Papua, Indonesia. Used for knitted bags and other daily handicrafts, the fabric has many applications and great cultural significance; it is a symbol of traditional knowledge, new life, hope and communal spirit.

Inspired by this ubiquitous fabric, the *Noken* programme has created a strong network of communities, united by a common cause and linked together through various complementary activities (known as *menoken*). These activities relate to the rights of IPLCs, economic development, sustainable agriculture, food sovereignty and environmental sustainability.

Backcover story:

Youths from Kalimantan and Papua plant trees on Yotoro Hill in Jayapura, Papua. Yotoro is one of the hills surrounding Sentani Lake, where various activities led by Samdhana and the *menoken* community are helping to support nature conservation.

Photos courtesy of youth *menoken* participants.

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