

Communication Strategy based on Local Wisdom "Arih Ersada" in Resolving Conflict Affected Communities

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Abstract: Strategy becomes an important plan or tactic that is made in order to keep the communication process run well and in accordance with the desired goals, especially in resolving a conflict. One of them is the issue of determining the production of the forest area and the construction of the Lau Simeme dam in six villages, that is Mardinding, Rumah Gerat, Sari Laba Jahe, Penen, Peria-ria and Kuala Dekah, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatera Province. The community considers government policies are wrong because they do not pay attention to the culture of the local community. For this reason, the community through the Arih Ersada organization created a communication strategy in resolving the conflict. The researcher investigates the problem by using interpretive paradigm. The research method is descriptive with a qualitative approach. Data collection techniques carried out by interviews, participant observation, and focused group discussion (FGD). The research found that Arih Ersada using the communication strategy based on local wisdom, they called *Arih-arih*, to resolve the conflict. The strategy has five stages, that is *arih-arih* (deliberations), *muat ukur sinterem* (embracing the community), *muat ingin ciau* (looking for asylum/assistance), *radu untung* (negotiation), and *ngerumahi silepus* (evaluation).

1 INTRODUCTION

The issuance of Decree of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry No. 579/Menhut-II/2014 concerning the establishment of permanent production forest areas of six villages in the Biru-biru District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatera Province, that is Mardinding Julu Village, Rumah Gerat, Sari Laba Jahe, Penen, Peria-ria and Kuala Dekah. The appointment of five villages including the location of the Lau Simeme dam national strategic project construction based on the Decree of the Deli Serdang Regent No. 2205 tanggal 23 Desember 2016, that is Mardinding Julu Village, Rumah Gerat, Sari Laba Jahe, Penen dan Kuala Dekah to be one form of conflict in communication that occurs.

The establishment of a permanent production forest area and the designation of the Lau Simeme dam construction site are considered by the community as an absurd decision. Apart from the absence of clear socialization, the government's official claim has an impact on the loss of land ownership and the absence of compensation for community owned land that will be submerged as a

dam later. In fact, the community it self actually has long controlled and managed the area. Legitimate land ownership of the community is strengthened by evidence in the form of a certificate from the village head, subdistrict head certificate, certificate of ownership or other proof of ownership that is recognized and legally valid.

The community then agreed to fight the government's decision, through an organization called "Arih Ersada" or in Indonesian means deliberation for negotiation. The organization was formed on February 21, 2018 at the Kuala Uruk Hamlet Village of Kuala Dekah, Biru-biru, with several objectives, namely to temporarily stop the Lau Simeme dam project until the completion of the acquisition and payment of compensation for the community-owned /cultivated land, demanding that community lands leave the permanent production forest area, claim compensation for land, plants / plants and other assets that are controlled by the community appropriately, appropriate and fair, requesting that similar incidents not occur again in the future, especially in Deli Serdang district, requesting the priority of affected communities to work and

carry out economic activities around the dam, get Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) from the Lau Simeme dam for the benefit of residents around the dam, get a facility from the government for the management of community land certificates.

The beginning of Arih Ersada's presence did not spontaneously provide solutions for affected communities. Arih Ersada faces various challenges such as the community who do not have the same understanding as what is desired by organizations and governments at the village and sub-district levels who tend to support every policy made by the district and central government and seeks to invite affected communities to support the policies of the district and central government by not demanding any compensation for their land in accordance with established rules.

Arih Ersada then designs and implements a communication strategy, in order to address and resolve conflicts that occur. Strategy can be interpreted as overall conditional decisions about the actions to be taken to achieve goals (Arifin, 2001). In communication, strategy becomes a plan and tactics that are made so that the communication process can run well and in accordance with the desired goals. Communication strategy is defined as the best combination of all elements of communication ranging from communicators, messages, channels (media), recipients to influences (effects) that are designed to achieve optimal communication goals (Cangara, 2014).

The communication strategy created by Arih Ersada is a communication strategy based on local wisdom values. Where the majority Karo tribe community still holds the philosophy of *merga silima, tutur siwaluh, rakut sitelu*. That philosophy is then used to create a communication strategy that they call Arih-arih. This communication strategy, has five stages, that is *arih-arih* (deliberation), *muat ukur sinterem* (embracing the community), *muat ingan ciau* (looking for asylum/Assistance), *radu untung* (negotiation) and *ngerumahi silepus* (evaluation).

2 DISCUSSION

The results show that Arih Ersada's organizational communication strategy in resolving community conflicts is likely to be Arih-arih (communication) strategy. The strategy has five stages, that is *arih-arih* (deliberation), *muat ukur sinterem* (embracing the community), *muat ingan ciau* (looking for asylum/Assistance), *radu untung* (negotiation) and *ngerumahi silepus* (evaluation).

1. Arih-arih (Deliberation)

Arih-arih in Indonesian is interpreted as deliberation. Based on researchers' observations, interviews and focus group discussions, it is known that this deliberation strategy is part of Karo's cultural philosophy. In Karo, the community already knows *merga silima, tutur siwaluh, rakut sitelu*.

Merga or *marga* is an identity of each Karo community. Usually, *merga* is used behind the name of every person karo. Mention of *merga* is also different between men and women. If he is male, then called *merga*. But, if women are to be called *beru*. *Merga* in the Karo community is known to have five main *merga* namely Karo-karo, Ginting, Tarigan, Sembiring and Perangin-angin. *Merga* is what will later be used as speech or in Karo namely *ertutur*, which will later be used to indicate relationships or kinship levels.

Ertutur, known in Karo, is also called *tutur siwaluh*, meaning there are eight of them. That is *Sembuyak, senina, senina sipemeren, senina siparibanen, anak beru, anak beru menteri, kalimbubu dan puang bubu*. This speech concerns the relationships created by marriage to form levels of kinship. *Rakut Sitelu* means three bonds. The bond in question is the arrangement of the position of Karo people in custom which must be respected. which was bound was called *senina, anakmberu* and *kalimbubu*. *Senina* is basically a family member. For example, Ginting *Senina* Ginting. Ginting is married to Br Karo-karo, this is called *Kalimbubu*, and there was someone else who married Br Ginting, then he was called *anak mberu*. Principally in the Karo family, this *senina* is considered to have activities / activities, the *kalimbubu* is respected by *senina* and the *anak mberu* does the work for *senina* and *kalimbubu*.

Through the description of that philosophy, it is known that in the Karo community there are different levels of relationships. These different levels make the Karo people familiar with the position, duties and responsibilities of each person with the level of relationship they have. Everyone cannot make decisions unilaterally when it comes to shared interests.

Likewise in facing the problem of determining the production forest area and the Lau Simeme dam project development plan. Kinship that is still close and still maintains custom, is the reason for the community to do so. Moreover, the problems they face have an impact on the lives of many people.

Deliberations conducted by Arih Ersada can be classified into three types. First, consultation between fellow management. Second, deliberation between the management and the community. Third,

deliberations involving administrators, the community and village / sub-district government officials. Deliberations in question are intended to provide information, correct misunderstandings as well as to provide appeals and instructions.

2. Muat Ukur Sinterem (Embracing The Community)

Arih-arih or deliberation is actually as a first step, to find the root of the problem. After deliberations are held, then Arih Ersada will make a uniform perception of each management, member and community affected by the production forest and Lau Simeme dam.

Uniformity of perception needs to be formed to lead the community to the same goal, not divided and helps the community to understand the conditions and provide an overview of the solutions to the problems that are happening to them.

As the main motor to fight for the goals of the affected communities, the determination of the production forest area and the Lau Simeme dam, Arih Ersada refers to this phase as measuring sinterem or embracing society. Arih Ersada does not let the problems that occur go unpunished. After knowing the point of the problem, then Arih Ersada readily came down to the middle of the community to make a solution. Comprehensive coordination of understanding is done to the community. Either agree or disagree. All embraced by Arih Ersada. Because, if ignored, the community will feel alone and easy to become victims of provocation, intimidation and will become a new problem for Arih Ersada.

3. Muat Ingan Ciau (Looking For Asylum/ Assistance)

As the driving force of the struggle, Arih Ersada also develops communication and coordination with external parties. The aim is to strengthen and assist Arih Ersada in fighting for the settlement of their case. Arih Ersada refers to this section as light fit or seeking asylum / assistance.

In the observation of researchers, seeking help intended by Arih Ersada is to open up to even those who they think are capable and willing to help them in solving community problems. The external parties referred to are members of the North Sumatera DPRD, Deli Serdang Regency DPRD, journalists. For North Sumatera DPRD and Deli Serdang regency, the communication network that is built is not binding in an agreement. Arih Ersada will see the extent of their seriousness and ability to help. Meanwhile, communication built with journalists is routine. That is, Arih Ersada will always provide the latest news about the development of their cases.

4. Radu Untung (Negotiation)

In addressing those who offer themselves or be asked for help, Arih Ersada will try to clearly discuss the problem at hand. Coupled with asking what people should give or have to do so that these people want to help them.

Arih Ersada said that this phase is called profit sharing or negotiation. For Arih Ersada, the negotiations were carried out as an openness so that in the future there won't be any demands or harms anyone. In fact, this negotiation was carried out to get to know the character of the people who would help them.

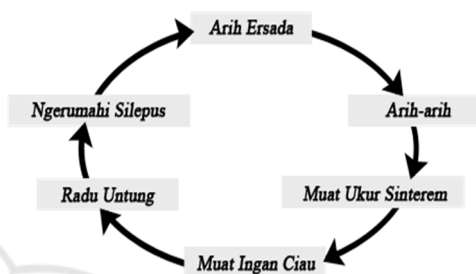


Figure 1: Strategy model of arih ersada (Researcher, 2019).

5. Ngerumahi silepus (evaluation)

The last important thing to do is *ngerumahi silepus* or evaluation. Whatever has been done starting from the dawn, loading and measuring the system, loading the light and the radu runtung will be evaluated. All stages will be analyzed their strengths and weaknesses. Evaluation is a lesson for Arih Ersada to avoid making the same mistakes.

It is known that the communication strategy carried out by Arih Ersada is a form of application of the cultural values of the local community. Where the dominant local people inhabited by the Karo tribe always live by sticking to their tribal philosophy. Arih Ersada's success in building communication and implementing communication strategies in accordance with the opinion of Edward T. Hall (Hartati, 2012) which states that *culture is communication and communication is culture*. The culture held is Arih-arih or deliberation.

It's just that the Arih-arih which is applied in the communication strategy overrides *simantek kuta* or village leaders as well as speeches or kinship lines. Because, Sembol Ginting as chairman and board of Arih Ersada was chosen to move the organization based on their ability and willingness to take care of the problems that were happening. In addition, the communication strategy created by Arih Ersada is the result of adjusting their cultural values with the need

to deal with the issues of production forests and the Lau Simeme dam, as a *muat ukur sinterem* (embracing the community), *muat ingan ciau* (looking for asylum/Assistance), *radu untung* (negotiation) and *ngerumahi silepus* (evaluation).

The success of the communication strategy adopted by Arih Ersada was due to the organization still holding their local cultural values. These values play an important role in building communication in the midst of conflict. Inversely proportional to what was done by the government who set their land as production forest even took it to build the Lau Simeme dam. Although it was conveyed by the government that the construction of dams would have a positive impact, for the people of the sub-districts of Biru-biru, the things the government did was wrong and not polite. Because, the government itself, does not pay attention to their cultural values.

As a result of the implementation of the communication strategy Arih Ersada was able to assist in the resolution of the conflict. In addition, the

achievement of the success of the communication strategy can be seen from the increased solidarity of the affected community as indicated by two indicators (Isfironi, 2014), namely collective awareness and a high level of homogeneity.

Referring to the thoughts of Philips Lesly, five communication strategies were developed by Arih Ersada, that is *arih-arih* (discussion), *muat ukur sinterem* (embracing the community), *muat ingan ciau* (looking for asylum/Assistance), *radu untung* (negotiation) and *ngerumahi silepus* (evaluation) have similarities with Philip Lesly's communication planning model (Lesly, 1998). The communication strategy adopted by Arih Ersada using different language / mention and simplifying several stages of Philip Lesly's communication planning model in one stage. Because, the strategy taken by Arih Ersada was made naturally to follow the culture of the local community and adjust their needs to solve the problems being faced. The similarity can be explained through the Figure 2.

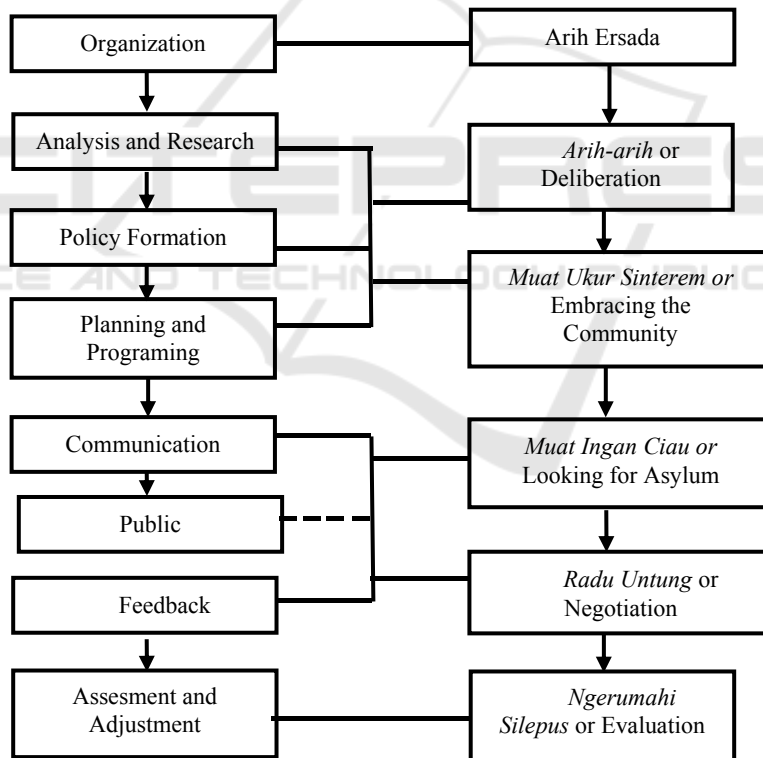


Figure 2: Equations and simplifications of Philip Lesly's communication planning model with Arih Ersada's communication planning model. (Researcher, 2019)

The figure explains that, the formulation of policies and communication activities is simplified into two stages, that is *arih-arih* and *muat ukur sinterem*. Because, the analysis and research stage

intended to find the problem that is happening, the policy formulation stage intended to determine the steps to be taken, as well as the program planning stage intended to make the program in this case the

division of tasks from each of the resources in the organization, theoretically simplified by Arih Ersada into two stages taht is *arih-arih* and *muat ukur sinterem*.

In the observation of researchers, these two stages are able to carry out the three-stage function as in Philip Lesly's communication planning model. Through stages of *arih-arih*, arih ersada is able to detect problems that arise, then can be analyzed and made appropriate steps or policies, in this case in accordance with mutual agreement as a solution so that the problem can be resolved. Through the *muat ukur sinterem* phase, the community is embraced and empowered by Arih Ersada in carrying out policies or programs. The community is embraced and empowered by Arih Ersada in carrying out policies or programs.

At the stage of communication and feedback activities such as those in Philip Lesly's communication planning, Arih Ersada elaborated into two stages, that is *muat ingan ciau* which means looking for help / asylum and *radu untung* which means negotiation. The *Muat ingan ciau* meant by Arih Ersada is to establish communication with outsiders who are considered by them to be able to provide assistance in any case according to their abilities, such as journalists, regional officials to politicians.

The communication that was built was then intensified and bound in a profit-making or negotiation stage with the intention that what was done was not detrimental to either Arih Ersada or the party who helped. *Feedback* will be directly obtained or seen after *muat ingan ciau* and *radu untung* are done. Between these two stages of Philip's communication planning model, there is a public stage that is not present in Arih Ersada's communication planning stage. For Arih Ersada, the public as referred to in the Philip Lasley model has automatically targeted the affected communities for the determination of the production forest area and the construction of the Lau Simeme dam. Finally, the evaluation and adjustment stages are similar to the *ngerumahi silepus* in the Arih Ersada communication planning model. In Indonesian, this stage is interpreted as evaluation. The evaluation referred to by Arih Ersada is also the same as Philip Lesly's communication planning model, namely as a correction and consideration in the improvement, improvement and adjustment of the communication strategy.

3 CONCLUSIONS

Establishment of a permanent production forest area and designation of the area to build the Lau Simeme dam, in six villages in the Biru-biru District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province, that is Mardinding Julu village, Rumah Gerat, Sari Laba Jahe, Penen, Peria-ria dan Kuala Dekah evidence that it is important to pay attention to the culture of the local community. Although, it was conveyed by the government that the construction of dams would have a positive impact, for the people of the sub-districts of Biru-biru, the things the government was doing were wrong and were not polite because they had ignored existing cultural values. That is why Arih Ersada created a five-stage Arih-arih communication strategy, that is *arih-arih* (deliberation), *muat ukur sinterem* (embracing the community), *muat ingan ciau* (looking for asylum/ Assistance), *radu untung* (negotiation) and *ngerumahi silepus* (evaluation). This communication strategy is based on the philosophy of the Karo people, *merge silima, tutur siwaluh, rakut sitelu*. With the communication strategy carried out by Arih Ersada, the conflicts that occur against affected communities can be resolved. The success of this strategy can be seen from the increasing solidarity of the community, shown by indicators of collective awareness as evidenced by the willingness of the community to gather and worked together to prepare time, location and consumption for their meeting to follow up on the problem being faced. In addition, this success was also demonstrated by a high level of homogeneity, shown by the existence of an attachment to the rules and a sense of community together to achieve goals through Arih Ersada.

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