

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN IMPROVING THE DYNAMICS OF FARMER GROUPS

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Abstract

Social capital is social energy in a community used to actuate a farmer group to be more dynamic to gain an end. Social capital cannot be formed by farmers individually, but it extremely depends on farmer group's capacity and government to build trust, norms and social networks. Qualitative method is used in this research. The data collection is completed by using triangulation including non-participant observation, interview in depth, and documentation. The approach used is a case study that is to study the role of social capital in improving the dynamics of the Orange farmer group Sidomulyo IV, Sidomulyo village, Umbulsari subdistrict, Jember regency. The study results show that the members' trust toward the farmer group Sidomulyo IV motivates their members to work together and to actively participate in the community's activities to achieve their goals, so that their group becomes more dynamic. Cooperation creates the norms for the farmer group including the meeting schedule, the cash collection, the facility utilization, government help administration, and pest and disease management. It also builds social networks to fulfill the members' needs involving the official kiosks of production utilities, *gapoktan* (farmer group alliance), government, Orange traders, and *Hippa* (association of water-using farmers). Counseling activity through SL program (field school) also can increase farmer group's social capital.

Key words: *social capital, dynamics, farmer group*

Introduction

Social capital is social energy. As energy, It can effectively drive the successfulness of the implementation of either government or private party policies (Hasbullah, 2006), and make a light of efficient decision making process with higher opportunity into success (Uphoff, 1999), and give an impact toward the community productivity (Putnam, 1993), as well as enable people all together to receive sources of livelihoods eminently (Dharmawan, 2002).

Farmer group has a very important role in the development of farm enterprise, yet there are 40% of farmer groups still in the beginner level (Wahyuni, 2003), Most of the groups are formed to more concern on the distribution of government help and facilitate the government program executor to do controlling, than on the increase of the members'

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