

AFARI

Tarr Fellowship 2023

PROJECT REPORT

Promoting Youth Engagement in Sustainable Agriculture



Written By

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ABOUT THE PROJECT....

Background

- Indonesia's crisis in young farmers' regeneration situation
- The increasing use of pesticides resulted in damage to the environment and the health of society.
- Focusing on the youth in programs that stimulate sustainable agricultural development could improve social capital, reduce risk, and stimulate economic growth.

This project is based in North Sumatra, Indonesia, focuses on promoting youth engagement in sustainable agriculture. I work with youth aged 16-25 to increase their knowledge and understanding of sustainable agriculture concepts and opportunities. In the first phase, I carried out 4 times youth campaign and engaging high schools and churches in four villages.

The second phase is a three-day training session on sustainable agriculture practices, for 18 selected participants. Through this project, I hope to increase youth knowledge and participation in sustainable agriculture activities.

This project is fully supported by the Tarr Foundation and AFARI, as part of the Tarr Fellowship. In implementing the project, I also collaborated with several stakeholders; PETRASA Foundation (my sending body), Sustainable Agriculture Future Youth (SAFYouth), and ARI graduates.

The trainers in the campaign and training are competent people in the topic of climate change, and experienced organic farming practitioners. Implementation of this project is even more interesting and complete because participants are able to experience staying in a farmer's house, observing their agricultural land, and discussing directly with them. Discussing with young organic farmers who graduated from universities also provides additional value for them, finding organic farming as a promising sector.

The activities and methods implemented in this project are very effective in introducing and engaging the youth in sustainable agriculture, which in the long term is expected to increase their possible contribution to climate change mitigation now and in the future.

The participants expressed how happy they were to be involved and participate in this project. At the end of the camp, they mentioned their gratitude to AFARI, PETRASA and Tarr Foundation to make the project possible.



AGRICULTURE LEARNING CAMP

This training aims to: engage young people and increase their knowledge, skills and understanding of the practices, principles, concepts and opportunities of sustainable agriculture. This activity is a continuation of the sustainable agriculture campaign which has been carried out in 3 high schools and 1 church. Participants in this training are students who have passed the selection carried out by the training committee.

A total of 18 students took part in the "**Agriculture Learning Camp.**" The training was held for 3 days in 3 locations.



Date : 23 - 25 November 2023

Location :

- **PETRASA office**
- **Simalem Farm, Karo Regency**
- **Dusun Sibabi, Pegagan Hilir, Dairi Regency**

Participant : 18 youths participant and 4 trainers/organizers (14 female, 8 male)

The implementation of this 3-day training is in collaboration with the PETRASA Foundation and Sustainable Agriculture Future Youth (SAFY). On the last session of the camp, participants were grouped into 3 groups to present their learning and experiences. All participants admitted that this program gave them a better perspective and understanding of agriculture, the farmer profession and the relationship between living things and the environment.

Furthermore, participants also learned about rural leadership and they felt a strong interest in exploring integrated organic farming. This agriculture camp is also recognized as a place and time for some of the participants to think about their hopes and aspirations for the future.

All the activities in this project opened my eyes to the fact that there are a huge limitations on access to and knowledge of information and training for young people in the villages. The unequal distribution of information causes their lack of knowledge about important issues, including agriculture innovations and climate change. Working with these young people motivates me to focus more on youth empowerment. By implementing this project, I enhanced my leadership abilities and my mentoring skills to the next level.



The Agriculture Learning camp is intended to encourage young people to learn the concepts and contributions of sustainable agriculture.



Day 1 - November 23, 2023

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ORGANIC FARMING

PETRASA Office

The first day's activities of 'AGRICULTURE LEARNING CAMP' started at PETRASA Foundation office with a brief introduction of all participants and committee members, then continued with the following session:

- Ridwan Samosir presented the Session on Climate Change. He is a Program Director of the Petrasa Foundation and a 2017 ARI graduate. Topics covered include understanding climate change, its impact on the agricultural sector, and the contribution of agriculture itself to increasing global emissions. He also discussed climate change policies and mitigation in the agricultural sector.
- The second session about sustainable agriculture was presented by Muntilan Nababan, the division head of agriculture in PETRASA and a 2022 ARI graduate. The topics covered include the differences between conventional agriculture and nature friendly agriculture, then exploring sustainable agriculture principles and an in-depth discussion on sustainable agricultural practices, that the Petrasa Foundation developed in Dairi district, together with farmers.

SIMALEM FARM

After lunch, all participants departed for Simalem Farm.

- Upon arrival at Simalem Farm, participants were greeted by the Farm Supervisor, Mr. Frits Silalahi. He explained the organic farming business at Simalem Farm and also explained the cooperation system with organic farmers located around the area.
- Then, participants got the opportunity to explore and observe the greenhouse planted with organic green vegetables and tomatoes. Here, participants asked questions regarding the use of organic fertilizers and pesticides, the composition of the materials used, and how to make the fertilizers. Mr. Frits together with one of the field staff patiently delivered explanations and motivation to the participants.
- The visit ended at the organic product packaging location. At this place, participants learned about packaging, organic certification, and the consumer group of Simalem Farm.

Day 2 - November 24, 2023



After exploring the forest, the activity continued with leadership games and team-building activities, where we learned about cooperation, concentration, creativity, and initiative. The participants enthusiastically and actively took part in the game of building a tower from the materials provided, followed by the paper chain game, which taught about cooperation, self-control, and speed. Each game provides an overview of the participant's character in leadership, seen from initiating initiative, giving direction, sharing tasks, and coordinating with his or her group mates.

In the evening, the participants arrived at a farmer's house in Pegagan Hilir and immediately set up tents for a place to stay overnight. Before taking a rest, participants gathered around the campfire, sang together, and enjoyed grilled corn while learning general knowledge through quizzes and discussions with mentors.

SIMALEM FARM

Day 2 activities began with a Jungle track to see and enjoy the view of the Twin Waterfalls. Participants explored the forest led by a guide who explained the benefits of several types of leaves in the forest and learned the natural compass. The group was also lucky to meet a Siamang in the forest.

This activity emphasizes the urgency of protecting ecosystems and forests for the survival of living creatures. The participants also learned about helping each other and caring for fellow participants.



The evening session starts at 8 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. The speaker is Ferdinand Sianturi, a young organic farmer.

Ferdinand shared his experiences and his story when he chose to do organic farming after completing his studies at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of North Sumatra. He explained about the organic farming practices he uses in managing coffee, strawberries, and beekeeping. Ferdinand also shared knowledge about the marketing system for his organic products. The participants were very enthusiastic about learning from Ferdinand about how to make organic fertilizers and pesticides.

Ferdinand highlighted the importance of understanding economic, social, and environmental principles in sustainable agriculture.



Learning about Beekeeping, Organic Coffee and Integrated Farming

• Beekeeping

On the third day, the last day of the Agriculture Learning Camp, the participants learned directly from Mr. Laia, an organic farmer who has been assisted and trained by PETRASA for years. He raises honey bees, integrated with coffee, andaliman (local pepper) and, calliandra as shade trees. Mr. Laia explained about beekeeping, the use of boxes for bee colonies, types of wood, the characteristics of bees, and how to harvest honey from beehive boxes.

One lucky participant had the opportunity to harvest honey from one of the beehives. He needs to wear protective clothing against bee stings. All participants were very enthusiastic while listening to Mr. Laia's explanation. They asked various detailed questions about how to start beekeeping and how to maintain it. At the end of the activity all participants had the opportunity to eat and enjoy the honeycomb that was harvested that day.

• Organic Coffee

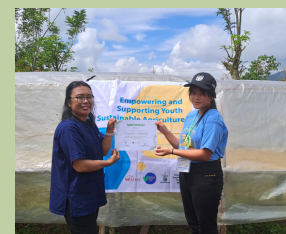
After learning about beekeeping, we walked to Mr. Laia's organic coffee field, adjacent to the location of the honeybee boxes.

On the organic coffee farm, Mr. Laia also grows tree tomatoes (tamarillo) and a type of sichuan pepper or called andaliman in the local language. He explained how to care for these plants organically; he told us the benefits obtained from the integration of various crops, and briefly, he also explained the analysis of income and costs in his farming business.

From the coffee field, participants observe the process of coffee drying. Mr. Laia explained the post-harvest process, drying, and how to find out whether the coffee beans have reached the right level of moisture content. He also shared his experience in marketing organic coffee at better prices by reaching out to consumers directly.



Certificate of Participation



We were successfully implementing the 3-day training. In the final session, we asked the participants to give short presentations about the experiences and learning they gained from this program. They explained how this training gave them important as well as fun experiences, which changed their perspective and gave them a better understanding of farming, farmers, and how ecosystems are connected.

As a follow-up plan, participants will prepare reports for their schools and share their knowledge with their parents and friends. They are also expected to be involved in any environmental-themed activities in the future. Each participant received a training participation certificate, handed over directly by PETRASA staff and an AFARI fellow.

PROJECT PROCESS

Activity	Output	Outcome
<p>1. Sustainable Agriculture Campaign at 4 schools/church</p> <p>2. Three (3)-day training "Agriculture Training Camp"</p> <p>3. Partnership with local NGOs and local stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 212 youths joined and participated in campaigns that held in 4 schools/church * 62 students trained and participated in organic fertilizer and eco-enzyme-making practice. * 18 youth trained and participated in a 3-day training, the "Agriculture Learning Camp." * Established relationship with local stakeholders to achieve common goals on youth empowerment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Participants have a better perspective on agriculture and farmer profession * Students at Siempat Nempu Hulu High school applied their training knowledge by making and using organic fertilizer in their school garden * Participants interested in learning more about beekeeping and organic farming businesses * At least 15 youths are willing to be mentored and continue to participate in other environmental protection activities. * Developed the mutually helpful and impactful relationships and collaboration between AFARI fellow with local NGOs and organic farming practitioners.

CONCLUSION

The lack of information and environmental-related activities is one of the causes of the limited abilities and knowledge of rural youth about nature-friendly agricultural innovation, climate change, and ecology. Village youth are agents of change, innovators, and future leaders. Providing them with this knowledge is essential so they know, intend, and are able to contribute to protecting their villages and land.

The series of activities in this project have given these young people valuable experiences. Personally, the project also allowed me to share my knowledge and experiences on rural development, which is hopefully inspiring. I listened to their opinion and learned from their situation, and therefore I can plan and build more effective mentoring concepts. This project improved my abilities in leadership, youth empowerment, organizing effective projects, and building better mentoring methods.



Empowering and Supporting Youth in Sustainable Agriculture