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NGATA TORO COMMUNITY

Indonesia



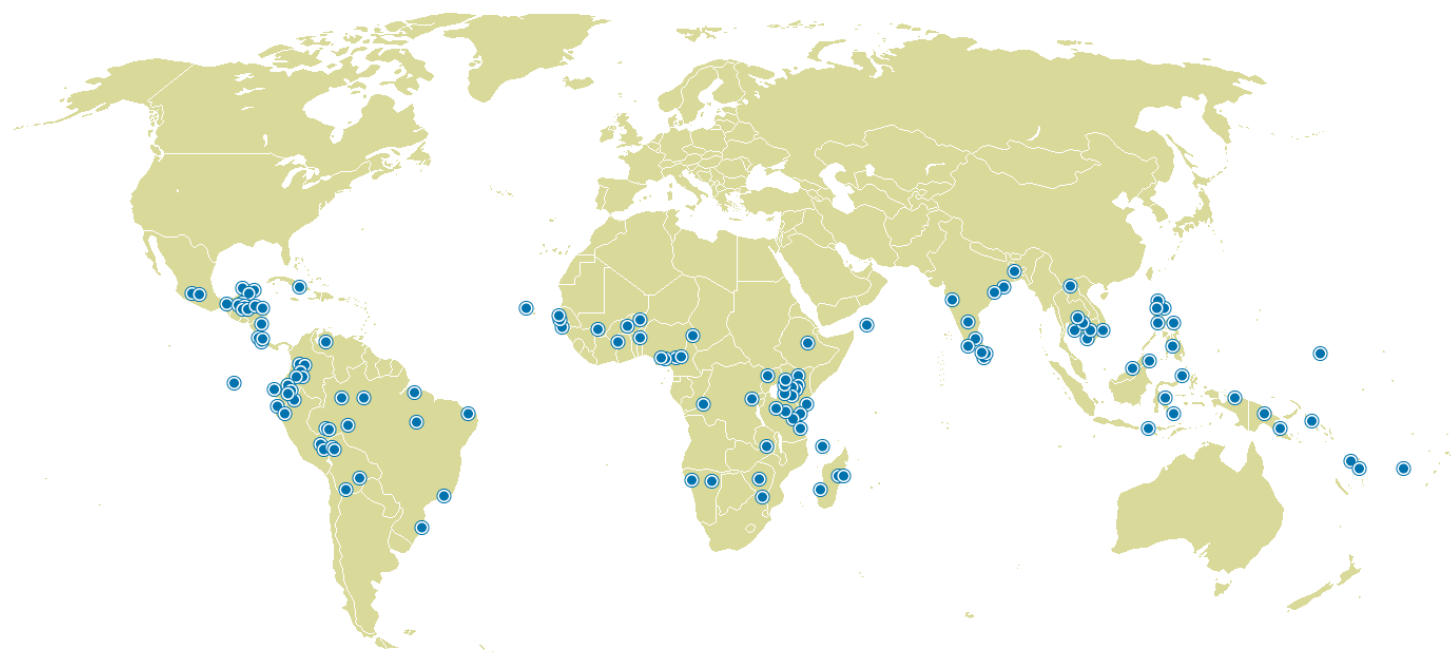
Equator Initiative Case Studies

Local sustainable development solutions for people, nature, and resilient communities

UNDP EQUATOR INITIATIVE CASE STUDY SERIES

Local and indigenous communities across the world are advancing innovative sustainable development solutions that work for people and for nature. Few publications or case studies tell the full story of how such initiatives evolve, the breadth of their impacts, or how they change over time. Fewer still have undertaken to tell these stories with community practitioners themselves guiding the narrative.

To mark its 10-year anniversary, the Equator Initiative aims to fill this gap. The following case study is one in a growing series that details the work of Equator Prize winners – vetted and peer-reviewed best practices in community-based environmental conservation and sustainable livelihoods. These cases are intended to inspire the policy dialogue needed to take local success to scale, to improve the global knowledge base on local environment and development solutions, and to serve as models for replication. Case studies are best viewed and understood with reference to *'The Power of Local Action: Lessons from 10 Years of the Equator Prize'*, a compendium of lessons learned and policy guidance that draws from the case material.



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PROJECT SUMMARY

The Ngata Toro Community's 22,300 hectares of traditional lands lie partly within Lore Lindu National Park, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve located on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi. Since 1993, two local organizations have worked to strengthen traditions, customary laws, and local institutions for sustainable use of forest, land and water resources.

The Organization for the Indigenous Women of Ngata Toro Village (Organisasi Perempuan Adat Ngata Toro - OPANT) and the Institute for Indigenous People of Ngata Toro Village have promoted the sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products, low-impact agriculture, fish farming, and ecotourism in and around the national park. Following the recognition of their traditional lands in 2001, the community has developed a series of regulations governing resource use within its boundaries.

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KEY FACTS

EQUATOR PRIZE WINNER: 2004

FOUNDED: 1993

LOCATION: Ngata Toro Village, Sulawesi island

BENEFICIARIES: Indigenous people of Ngata Toro Village

BIODIVERSITY: Lore Lindu National Park



Background and Context



The indigenous people of Ngata Toro Village live in an enclave of Lore Lindu National Park, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve located on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi. The 2,180-km² park covers both lowland and montane forests, providing habitat to numerous rare species, including 77 bird species endemic to Sulawesi. Plant species include *Eucalyptus deglupta*, important medicinal plants, and rattans, while endemic mammals include the Tonkean Macaque (*Macaca tonkeana tonkeana*) and the North Sulawesi babirusa (*Babyrousa babyrussa celebensis*).

Campaigning for indigenous rights

Of the Ngata Toro community's 22,300 hectares of traditional lands, 18,000 hectares lie within the National Park and have been legally recognized by the park authorities. The Ngata Toro are involved in the sustainable harvesting and production of non-timber forest products, low impact agriculture, fish farming, and ecotourism that are helping to reduce poverty, conserve the park's natural heritage, and build self-reliance. The recognition of their customary rights to land has made the people of Ngata Toro a best practice study for indigenous peoples in Indonesia and in the wider region. The park authorities have also acknowledged the community's traditional knowledge of local biodiversity and customary resource use laws, working collaboratively with the villagers inhabiting the park in monitoring and sustainably managing forest resources. The initiative has also promoted the use of non-timber forest products in traditional handcrafts and as organic fertilizers that can generate income for forest-dwellers.

Engaging all community stakeholders

The Ngata Toro Community consists primarily of two groups: the Organization for the Indigenous Women of Ngata Toro Village (*Organisasi Perempuan Adat Ngata Toro*, or OPANT) and the Institute for Indigenous People of Ngata Toro Village. The two institutions are made up of representatives from seven sub-villages of Ngata Toro;

the initiative has sought to engage all elements within the Ngata Toro community, including village government, indigenous institutions, women, religious figures, and youth members.

Beyond its impact in the sub-villages of the Ngata Toro community, the initiative has achieved an impressive level of global exposure and replication. Using presentations, seminars, workshops, and symposiums organized by its partner organisations and international actors, the indigenous men and women of Ngata Toro have been able to share their experiences with a diverse array of similar communities from around the world. The high degree of knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer learning the group has engaged in has ensured that it has played a leading role in these international processes, inspiring others by profiling its success in promoting indigenous and women's issues in the context of local conservation and development.



Key Activities and Innovations



The key activities of the Ngata Toro community have been to preserve the ecosystem of the Lore Lindu National Park through revitalizing indigenous knowledge and traditional laws of access, control and sustainable use of natural resources, and to obtain economic benefits from the preservation and conservation of the tropical forest ecosystem in which they live to ensure sustainable development. Since 1993, the community, represented by the Institute for Indigenous People of Ngata Toro Village and OPANT, has carried out initiatives aimed at strengthening traditions, customary laws, culture, and local institutions for the sustainable use of forest, land and water resources for the benefit of all community members.

Participatory beginnings

The initiative began with community-led discussions on the inter-related challenges facing the Ngata Toro people: namely, the over-exploitation of natural resources, the lack of legal recognition of their lands, and low household income levels. A positive catalyst, meanwhile, was the high level of natural potential in the Ngata Toro customary land. These initial discussions led to a customary village Musyawarah, or mediation process, at the community level. The community then began mapping their traditional land and documenting indigenous knowledge and customary laws, and appointed a community member as a local forest ranger.

Based on a participatory mapping exercise, the group then identified land usage zones based on their customary resource use system. With assistance from legal experts and academics, in 2000-2001 the community began negotiations with the Lore Lindu National Park authorities for the recognition of their traditional land and customary laws. This was ultimately successful, leading to the community drawing up a series of village regulations governing resource use within their 22,300 hectares of forestland. The agreement and regulations were disseminated throughout the community's seven sub-villages; indigenous institutions were empowered to oversee resource use, and a number of village enterprises were begun, in-

cluding fish farming, animal husbandry, and handicrafts made from bamboo, palms, rattan, and tree bark.

Multifaceted forest management

Some of the primary threats the community has had to face include the clearing of forest for agriculture, a practice that was commonplace among communities living on the forest's edge. The initiative



has also combated the hunting and trapping of wild pigs and anoa (*Bubalus depressicornis*, also known as Dwarf Buffalo) within the forest, and has reduced logging of teak for use in constructing local dwellings. In place of these environmentally harmful livelihood activities, the initiative has provided training in offering forest guiding services to tourists, and producing traditional handicrafts from non-timber forest resources for sale. Lore Lindu National Park received 2,000 visitors in 2007: the high volume of tourism offers multiple opportunities for community members to benefit economically. The group has also undertaken replanting of forest areas where tree clearing had led to soil erosion during heavy rains.

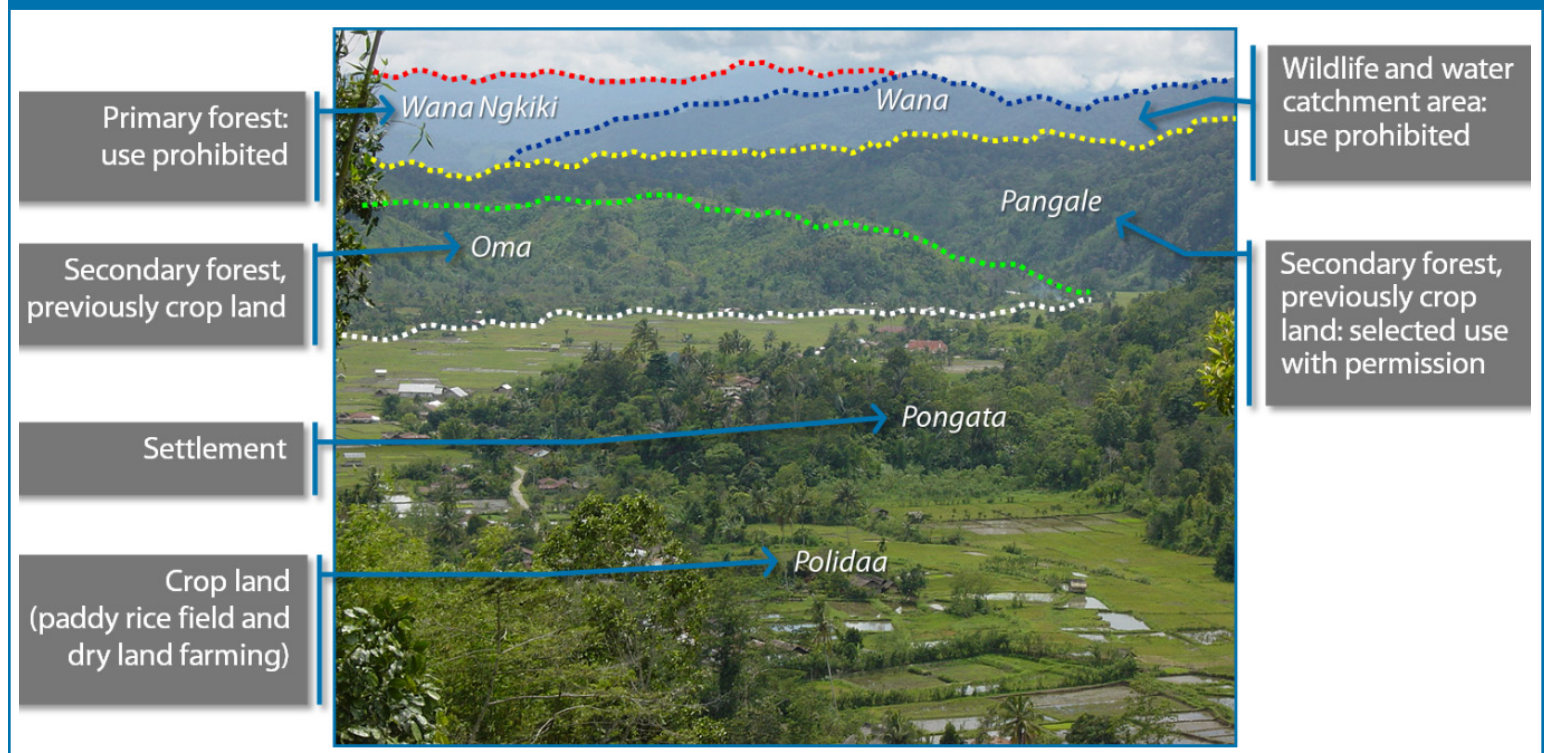
Bringing local and external stakeholders into the fold

Inherent to the solutions put forward by the Ngata Toro initiative is the belief that challenges can be overcome if all stakeholders share an interest in sustainable forest management for mutual gains. Disagreements have been resolved through the forums of village meetings and indigenous meetings, which deal with problems in the community related to human relationships (*Hintuwu*) and the relationship between humans and nature (*Katuwua*). Both forms of meetings are attended by representatives of all sectors of the Ngata Toro people. The initiative has brought together the National Park authority, the regional government of Sigi Regency, academics, international environmental NGOs, and the indigenous people of Ngata Toro to conserve the forest ecosystem. Since 2001, the group has also focused on disseminating the results of their work to other indigenous Indonesian communities, emphasizing the role of local institutions and customary law in environmental conservation.



The initiative has also pioneered several innovative methods for communicating ideas both within the Ngata Toro community and to outside observers. These have included technological innovations, such as training the local forest ranger in using a compass, binoculars and walkie-talkies for monitoring human activity within the forest boundaries. The Ngata Toro community has also effectively disseminated information through publications and campaigns on indigenous knowledge to other indigenous groups living around the forest boundaries. Finally, training in sustainable forest management techniques has been given to members of the Organization for the Indigenous Women of Ngata Toro Village and the Institute for Indigenous People of Ngata Toro Village to empower them as local conservation leaders.

Fig. 1: Ngata Toro Land Use



Source: Ngata Toro

Impacts



BIODIVERSITY IMPACTS

Following the demarcation of the 18,400 hectares of the Ngata Toro community's traditional land located within the conservation area, the initiative has devised strategies for the sustainable management of the community's forest. Participatory land-use mapping and spatial planning have defined sustainable land-use zones that delineate discrete areas for resource extraction and utilization, and those prioritized for conservation. In the latter, for instance, regulations have prohibited the felling of teak trees for construction. As a result, community members have reported an increased number of large teak trees within Ngata Toro's conservation area.

The initiative has given training in the production and use of organic fertilizer – using compost prepared with local plant and animal materials, and facilitated by a stimulant composed of microorganisms – that has reduced farmer dependence on chemical fertilizers, and in turn maintained water quality and avoided chemical run-off. Previously, swidden farming had resulted in the loss of many local medicinal plants and agro-biodiversity; similarly, poaching meant that

animal species were located far from villages. Currently, community members are spotting many endemic species near farms again. Local forest rangers also conduct routine patrols in the indigenous forest of Ngata Toro, aiding in biodiversity monitoring. Key protected species include the Dian's Tarsier (*Tarsius diana*), Babirusa (deer hog), Pygmy Tarsier (*Tarsius pumilus*), Sulawesi Bear Cuscus (*Ailurops ursinus furvus*), Sulawesi rat (*Rattus celebensis*), and the Sulawesi Palm Civet (*Macrogalidia musschenbroekii*). Endemic bird species protected include the Maleo fowl (*Macrocephalon maleo*).

Measuring the benefits of conservation

The Ngata Toro forest has become a popular site for research for local and foreign academicians working in forestry conservation and community-based institutions. Since 2000, community members have worked with the Indonesian-German collaborative research project titled "Stability of the Rainforest Margin" (STORMA). This project has intensively investigated forest clearing in the National Park and its buffer zone, concluding that the protected area status of the park has resulted in a reduction of the deforestation rate of 9%.

Table 1: Ngata Toro Community occupations

Primary occupation	Year			
	1993	1998	2003	2008
Subsistence farmer (peasant)	60%	50%	35%	20%
Crop farmer (cacao, coffee, vanilla, paddy field)	5%	7%	20%	30%
Self-employed businessman	1%	1%	1.50%	2%
Artisan	1%	1%	1.50%	2.50%
Teacher, district government employee, village midwife	0.50%	0.50%	1%	1%
Research assistant, local forest ranger	0%	0.20%	0.50%	1%

Source: Ngata Toro

Ngata Toro's indigenous knowledge has been documented in the form of a movie by village indigenous youth, while OPANT has produced a book of traditional medicine plants and customary laws. Associated social and economic benefits from the improved ecological integrity of the park have included the availability of traditional medicines in indigenous forest of Ngata Toro, the availability of clean water sources, the availability of irrigation water for fields – tree felling is prohibited in the park's river basin –and decreased incidences of flooding and landslides thanks to reforestation projects.

SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS

The initiative has helped to diversify livelihood options for community members, decreasing reliance on high-impact activities such as hunting endangered animals, harvesting rattan in the forest, and swidden agriculture, which have been regulated by the reintroduction of customary law. Community members are more typically engaged in cultivating annual crops such as coffee, cacao tree and vanilla in small fields outside the conservation area. Ecotourism and ethno tourism within the Lore Lindu National Park, meanwhile, have combined to boost alternative income-generating opportunities for the Ngata Toro community.

The increase in small-scale cultivation can be explained by the introduction of new farming methods, making agriculture more financially attractive to community members. The use of organic fertilizers and the reintroduction of traditional plant varieties have helped to reduce poverty, as traditional and organic crop varieties yield a higher market value than non-organic crops. There is a growing market in Indonesia for traditional medicine and medicinal plants. Crops in Ngata Toro that are grown organically include local varieties of rice, cacao, coffee, vanilla, traditional medicinal plants, herbs and

vegetables. The reintroduction of medicinal plants, meanwhile, has helped to reduce household spending by cutting health care costs.

Other social benefits of the Ngata Toro initiative include the preservation of indigenous culture, with its close ties between human communities and nature. Collaboration between various village institutions and substantial capacity building had helped to improve the organizational capacity of the Ngata Toro community, while the leading roles played by women and indigenous people in the Ngata Toro initiative have helped to improve the position of both groups.

POLICY IMPACTS

By revitalizing traditional resource practices and access laws, the Ngata Toro community has strengthened indigenous governance, demonstrating its effectiveness as a strategy for local level conservation and development. Traditional fines and social sanctions are used to discourage illegal activities; a system of customary laws have been developed to regulate extraction and use of natural resources; and permits are issued to allow resource extraction from within the Ngata Toro lands. These permits are issued by the village government, and are co-signed by the community's Organization for the Indigenous Women of Ngata Toro Village and the Institute for Indigenous People of Ngata Toro Village.

The impacts of this process have been felt at many levels. In Ngata Toro itself, the policy has achieved widespread acceptance among both the indigenous and non-indigenous communities, demonstrating the power of social sanctions and customary norms as deterrents to resource over-exploitation. The community consistently adheres to customary laws mutually agreed by the *Hintuwu Libu Ngata*, the highest customary *Musyawarah* in Ngata Toro.

The process also gained acceptance at the district level, where the district government recognized the regional autonomy of Ngata Toro in legislation in 2004, and has gained exposure at both the regency and national level. The Ngata Toro case has been used a best practice model for indigenous peoples across Indonesia living adjacent to National Parks and state forests. In an effort to affect policy, the Institute for Indigenous People of Ngata Toro Village is represented as a stakeholder in decision-making meetings with the National Park authorities and forest department. For instance, one policy success as a result of lobbying by the Ngata Toro community is that members are now permitted to harvest coffee planted in the National Park before it was designated a conservation area.



“Since the commencement of the Ngata Toro initiative, there have been a lot of changes in the community, especially in forest management, because people are deterred by the indigenous sanctions that are applied. For example, before our initiative, many people engaged in illegal logging and harvesting forest products: now, few people set traps and hunt in the indigenous forests of Ngata Toro.”

Mr. Said, Forest Ranger of Ngata Toro

Sustainability and Replication



SUSTAINABILITY

The initiative's sustainability relies heavily on the wealth of indigenous knowledge and customary laws that make up the community's traditional heritage, and continued cooperation between the whole of the community and the institutions that represent Ngata Toro. Cultural norms passed down from generation to generation strongly emphasize the interconnectedness of human welfare and the natural environment. These relationships are captured by the ideas of *Hintuwu* and *Katuwua*, focusing on relations between humans and with their natural heritage. The Ngata Toro's *Hintuwu Libu Ngata* plays an important role in mediating between community members, while inclusivity is enabled by the active participation of a wide range of community members.

The initiative is not viewed merely as a "project"; instead it has aimed to change attitudes to community stewardship of natural resources. Since its inception, the Ngata Toro community has sought to instill in all members the concept of the forest as the source of sustainable human livelihoods.

REPLICATION

Following the success of community-based forest management in Ngata Toro, the community has reached out to other indigenous communities bordering the Lore Lindu National Park seeking to replicate their success. Two villages – Sungku and Oo Parese – are working with Ngata Toro in revitalizing customs, traditions and their indigenous knowledge to manage local resources.

In Sungku Village, an attempt to transfer management of forest within the National Park to the village community, along the lines of the Ngata Toro model, was not successful. Instead, control of the park remained in the hands of the central government. However, a project undertaken by OPANT in 2005-2006, with support from

the UNDP-implemented GEF Small Grants Programme, has helped to build the capacity of the village's indigenous women's group in developing non-timber traditional handicrafts, using bark cloth, rattan and bamboo, and environmentally friendly agriculture.

In contrast, efforts to strengthen customary laws and local institutions in Oo Parese Village have been successful. The sub-village of Marena's traditional land has been legally recognized within the National Park, and has been managed and monitored collaboratively by the community since 2007. The village's traditional institutions and women's group have played the roles of *Totua Ngata* and *Tina Ngata* – local terms for Village Male and Female Elders that lead decision-making in partnership with the village government. Residents of Marena sub-village in Oo Parese are now able to harvest coffee from within the Lore Lindu National Park conservation area, and implement traditional regulations in managing and supervising customary areas that are accepted by the Lore Lindu National Park Office.

The Ngata Toro community has shared knowledge and best practices with many other communities in Central Sulawesi province, both around Lore Lindu National park and further afield, as well as profiling its success within Indonesia and internationally. Around Lore Lindu National park, this has included the following cases:

- In 2005, the community worked with the indigenous community of Lempe Village, Central Lore district, during an information sharing session for community groups around Lore Lindu National Park, facilitated by CARE.
- The same year, Ngata Toro representatives also shared their knowledge on the role of audiovisual media in advocating for traditional communities, in cooperation with the Small Grants Programme (SGP).
- From 2005 to 2006, over 22 months, OPANT was engaged in capacity building with communities around Lore Lindu National Park, including Sungku Gimpu, as well as the villages of Pandere,

Tuwa, Lempelero, and Pilimakujawa, as part of an SGP-funded project.

- For eight months in 2008, OPANT was engaged in capacity building with local institutions in 14 villages in the areas of South Lore and West Lore, as part of USAID's "SERASI" programme.
- In 2009, the community advocated on behalf of the rights of the community of Lindu – in concordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent – in cooperation with the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (*Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara - AMAN*).

Other efforts to replicate the community's success within Central Sulawesi have included:

- In 2007, the Ngata Toro initiative was engaged in strengthening local institutions in the indigenous Banggai community, which had been affected by natural resource exploitation in the form of nickel mining and a palm oil plantation. Again, this work involved OPANT working closely with the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN).
- In 2008, together with the Palu Red White Foundation, Ngata Toro encouraged the recognition of the Tau Ta'a traditional community in Central Sulawesi Province.
- In the same year, the initiative also worked with Salena Village traditional community; this activity was self-financed by OPANT.
- Also in 2008, the community shared its experiences with a traditional community in Torean Islands National Park, during a regional conference funded by the Samdhana Institute. In 2009, Ngata Toro undertook similar work with a Banggai traditional community on the roles and functions of local institutions in traditional communities, during a regional conference also funded by the Samdhana Institute.

At the national level, representatives of Ngata Toro community have participated in events across Indonesia since 2005. These have included the Traditional Women's Solidarity Congress (Makassar, 2005); National Parks Congress (Bogor, 2006); a tourism congress (Makassar, 2007); and the Naftali Forest Congress (in 2008, held in Jakarta).

Finally, the group has been well-represented at international forums on conservation, community-based development, and indigenous peoples' issues. These have included the following high-level events:

- Asian Indigenous Women's Network Congress (Bagio City, Philippines, 2004)
- Convention on Biological Diversity Workshop (India, 2005)
- 8th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Curitiba, Brazil, 2006)
- 6th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (New York, 2007)
- UN meeting on climate change, (New York, 2008)
- Asia Pacific NGO Forum to mark Beijing+15 – the 15-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action on the Commission on the Status of Women – during which OPANT delivered a presentation

on the impacts of climate change (Manila, Philippines, October 2009)

In addition to playing a role in these national and international processes, the Ngata Toro community has also begun comprehensively documenting their indigenous knowledge and customary laws governing natural resource use, to be used as a negotiating tool for the recognition of customary rights on a broader scale. OPANT, meanwhile, is establishing traditional women's groups as a means of rebuilding culturally-based gender equality in many other communities bordering the National Park. Further dissemination of the Ngata Toro model has been enabled through the role played by two community members in the regional indigenous peoples' organisation, Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN): currently, one member serves as chairperson of the Central Sulawesi office, while a member of OPANT serves in its Directorate of Women's Empowerment.

PARTNERS

CARE International - Indonesia: have helped to deliver clean water supplies to Ngata Toro; gave financial aid for the development of non-timber traditional handicrafts; gave financial aid to OPANT for the development of the women's groups in Ngata Toro and Sungku Village; and facilitated the writing and publishing of 'Women and Conservation' publication.

The Nature Conservancy: financed the documentation of traditional laws in the villages of Sungku and Bolapapu.

The Free Land Foundation (*Yayasan Tanah Merdeka*): conducted capacity building with the Ngata Toro community to help in establishing rights and sovereignty over its traditional land; also aided in participatory mapping of the Ngata Toro traditional land.

Stability of the Rainforest Margin (STORMA) Project: provided incentive costs for local forest rangers in monitoring Ngata Toro's traditional land for one year.

Researchers from Bogor Agricultural University helped to facilitate workshops on local regulations, and developed a framework and responsibilities for the relationship between the different institutions in Ngata Toro.

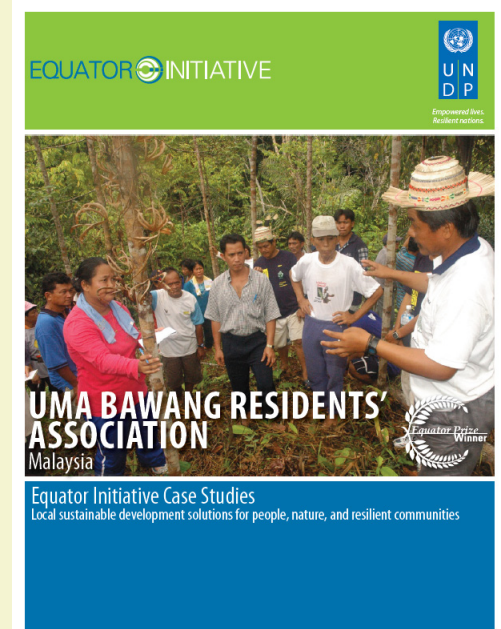
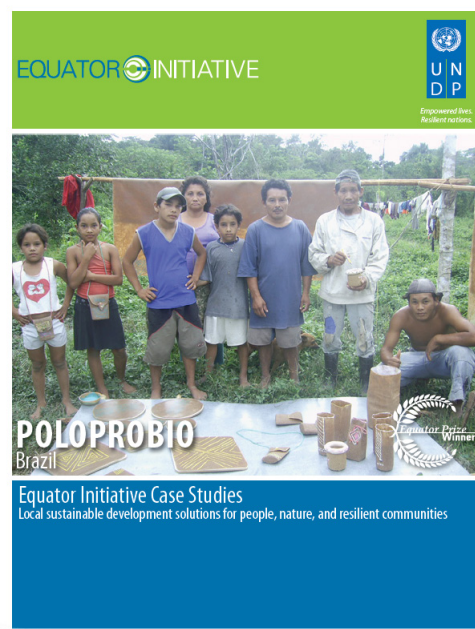
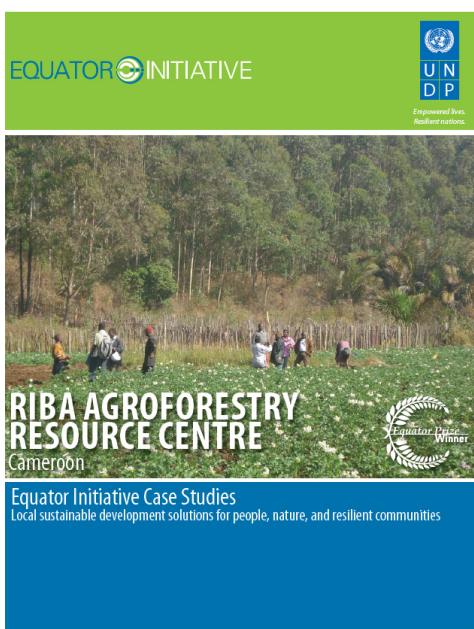
Lore Lindu National Park Authority: have hosted meetings to discuss management of the National Park; have also paid the plane ticket costs of three traditional handicraft trainers to train the Ngata Toro non-timber traditional handicraft group.

UNDP-implemented Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme: has facilitated an audiovisual documentation workshop for the indigenous youth of Ngata Toro; funded the publishing of documentation on local knowledge and medicinal plants in Ngata Toro; and funded a campaign on the initiative and local institutions in Ngata Toro through printed media and a village video book.

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