



Tropentag, September 16-18, 2015, Berlin, Germany

“Management of land use systems for enhanced food security:  
conflicts, controversies and resolutions”

## Drivers and Consequences of Farmers’ Resistance Against Official Resettlement Plans at the Slope of the Merapi Volcano in Indonesia

ANDIK FATAHILLAH, EVA SCHLECHT

*University of Kassel / Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Animal Husbandry in the Tropics and Sub-tropics, Germany*

### Abstract

The eruption of the Merapi volcano in 2010 was the heaviest in the last century, leading to major ecological and social devastation and in the aftermath dispute and conflict between local farmers and the government. The government prohibited the resettlement of the most severely affected areas at the foothills of the mountain, so as to diminish losses in the next eruption. In opposition to this policy, the local farmers want to stay on their land and insist to resettle. The resistance is particularly high in four hamlets located at the southern slope of the Merapi volcano, namely Balerante in Balerante village, and Kalitengah Lor, Kalitengah Kidul, and Srunen in Glagaharjo village. The villages of Kepuharjo and Umbulharjo were also strongly affected by the eruption, with the tremendous pyroclastic flow burying eight hamlets in both village territories.

To better understand the current situation, an interview-based field study was conducted in the framework of an MSc thesis in the mentioned villages. During November 2014 - January 2015, individual interviews with 24 farmers and 3 village heads, as well as three group discussions were conducted, especially targeting the resilience of human, natural, social, financial and infrastructural capital in the region.

The results show that in most village territories the ecology of the foothill landscape has recovered, together with infrastructure and people’s financial situation. Therefore, farmers view a realistic chance to re-continue gaining their livelihood from farming their land; some even consider the conditions for farming better than before the eruption. In all villages, farmers have started collective as well as individual actions to cope with the current situation and adapt to it. Farmers in Kalitengah Kidul, for example, daily collect small amounts of money in their community in order to buy new land at the lower slope of the mountain.

The gained insights allow identifying the current constraints to resolving the conflict between farmers and the government, and approaches are proposed to overcome these.

**Keywords:** Adaptation, conflict resolution, eruption, Merapi volcano, resilience