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“Exploring opportunities ...
for managing natural resources and a better life for all”

Contextualisation of a biodiversity monitoring exercise in Lore Lindu National Park, Indonesia

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Abstract

Well-designed long-term monitoring programmes are essential for effective governance of natural resources. They reveal the current state and changes within a target area, deepen our scientific understanding of the natural environment, and offer feedback on the success or failure of management decisions. Even more, they provide immense value and satisfaction to the lives of the people involved in the monitoring exercises and an opportunity to exemplify more just scientific practices. In this study, we showcase the experiences of the 44 teammates who participated in the Remeasurement of tree diversity plotsfieldwork campaign that took place from February 2023 to February 2024 in Lore Lindu National Park in Sulawesi, Indonesia as part of the establishment of a long-term monitoring system for the park under Forest Program III, a financial collaboration programme between the German Development Bank KfW and Indonesian government. While the team typically consisted of seven to ten teammates at any given time, the campaign employed a total of 10 national park staff, 8 students of Indonesian universities, 25 local workers, and one botanist. Of all 44 teammates, only one was non-Indonesian. As such, this campaign heavily emphasised learning from and enhancing local knowledge systems and supporting local research and capacity. We interviewed teammates informally in the field and distributed a questionnaire after its completion to contextualize the monitoring activities and identify impacts of the project work for those involved. Across all groups, this work engendered meaningful connections, taught valuable skills, imparted important knowledge, and lead to personal fulfilment and a sense of accomplishment. For national park staff, herbarium staff, and students, the field activities improved their ability to perform their usual tasks and cascaded into follow-up projects that are Indonesian-led. Local workers expressed that the work instilled an appreciation for the park's natural resources and an impetus to protect them. From these results, we believe the Remeasurement of tree diversity plotsfieldwork campaign was a success in this context, largely due to its emphasis on co-creation and local knowledge systems. We encourage such an approach for future projects to promote more just natural resource governance and exploration of nature.

Keywords: Contextualisation, Indonesia, local knowledge systems, long-term monitoring, Lore Lindu National Park