

HOW DO THE HARUKU INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DESIGN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?



GLOBAL ADVOCACY TEAM



INTERNATIONAL
ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT

This community-led development plan is part of a groundbreaking series created by the people of Haruku community in Indonesia and Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN) Maluku in partnership with the Global Advocacy Team initiative, convened by the International Accountability Project.

This initiative unites inspiring community organizers from around the world to conduct community-led research, engaging 945 people across 7 countries. Through co-designed and shared learning, this three-year journey has resulted in a series of transformative community-led development plans focused on locally rooted, globally connected solutions.

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Who We Are

Where We Live?

I am Martha Magdalena Patty, better known as Lenny Patty, an indigenous organizer in Maluku, Indonesia. I am currently the Chairperson of the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN) Maluku Region. AMAN is working on advocacy related to agrarian reform, environment and climate change, the right to self-determination of Indigenous Peoples, and human rights. I currently lead the coordination of the Global Advocacy Team (GAT) initiative in Negeri Haruku, together with my team. We are proud to be part of the GAT, which lays the foundation on the implementation of community-based research and community-based development planning.

Our History, Culture, and Identity

The vast majority of the population in Maluku Province come from Seram Island. Therefore, Seram Island is called Nusa Ina or Mother Island. It is said that there once lived a king in Nunu Saku, located on Seram Island. The king had two sons who were fighting with each other over the royal crown. To prevent a war between siblings, the two sons went to Haruku Island with their followers. They lived separately from each other. It is said that the followers of the elder son were known as the Patasiwa, or "Nine People," while the younger son's followers were called the Patalima, or "Five People." This distinction is reflected in the symbolism of their traditional houses, known as balileo. Before the arrival of organized religion, the Patasiwa built their balileo on stilts, while the Patalima constructed theirs directly on the ground.





In the earlier days, the Indigenous People of Haruku used to live and find food by hunting and farming in the mountains of the island. One of the Patalima groups inhabited the mountain area, which we refer to as Negeri Lama. The group formed six (6) aman (villages) namely:

- Aman Huing in the south of the region;
- Aman Hendatu, which is the village of the first people;
- Aman Heratu as the seat of the king;
- Aman Nuwei, which means "the village below;"
- Aman Kupau, which is a meeting place and site of ancestral heritage; and
- Aman Hatu, or village on the rock

At that time, there was a war that caused Aman Hendatu to move and become Aman Toumoi, to oversee the border area.

In the past, communities in Maluku frequently gathered to discuss territorial boundaries and intertribal conflicts. One notable outcome of these discussions was the Sou Pata Totu agreement between the Latuharhary Clan of Haruku and the Tahya Clan of Sameth. This pact, symbolized by the song "Sopa Mia O," sung during the installation ceremonies of leaders and ceremonial houses (hongkotu and bumbungan baileo) in both communities, reflected a strong alliance between them.

The Sou Pata Totu agreement formalized their commitment to mutual aid during times of war. It stipulated that the Tahya Clan would assist in the construction of the Haruku hongkotu and baileo, and vice versa. This agreement fostered a deep connection between the two neighboring communities, who shared a common faith and considered themselves as one. This enduring bond is reflected in the old saying, "Haruku to the Sea Sameth to the Sea, Haruku to the Land Sameth to the Land," which is still used to resolve disputes between the two villages. This proverb emphasizes their interconnectedness and shared destiny, reminding them that they are bound together by both land and sea.

In the 16th century, Portuguese explorers arrived on an island in pursuit of spices and colonization. Sailing along the southern coast, they landed at Negeri Ama, also known as Negeri Oma. Legend has it that the name originated from the Portuguese encounter with an elderly man upon their arrival. It is the reason why they call the island Nusa Ama (Ama meaning "old" in some local languages). The Portuguese proceeded to baptize the island's inhabitants.

Ama, facing the Banda Sea, is characterized by its deep waters and powerful waves. It is said that, during a violent storm, the anchor of a Portuguese ship snapped and was lost to the currents. This incident led to the island being called "Iron Waste Island." The Portuguese then continued their journey along the coast to seek a safer harbor. Eventually, they discovered a coastal area with a gently sloping contour, which also provided a more secure anchorage. This new location likely became a more permanent base for their activities on the island.





Upon landing at this safer location, Captain Viktor of the Portuguese was struck by the sight of numerous flowering trees lining the shore. The local inhabitants then told him that the trees were called haru-ukui, meaning "new tree" or "waru tree." From this point forward, the island became known as Haruku Island.

The Portuguese then built Fort Zealand on Haruku Island, enlisting the local population for its construction. To consolidate their control, they relocated people living in the mountainous area to the coastal area near the fort. This newly settled area was named Aman Haru-Ukui. In the culture of Maluku, every state has a local name, called teong negeri. Hence, this newly settled area was also known as Teong Negeri Pelasona Nanuroko, which later evolved into "Negeri Haruku." This strategic move by the Portuguese aimed to centralize the population and facilitate their administration and exploitation of the island's resources.

In 1553, the people of Negeri Haruku elected Hatubesi Rijaukota as their king, who reigned until 1580. The original six aman (villages) evolved into five soa (villages): Soa Raja, Soa Moni, Soa Lesirohi, Soa Suneth, and Soa Rumalesi. The kingship then passed to Tunisaha Rijaukota, followed by Ferdinandus, whose descendants continue to rule to this day.

In the 17th century, the history of Haruku Island changed as the Dutch entered the Land of Maluku, known as Spice Island or Mollucas. When the Dutch entered Haruku Island, there was a war between them and the Portuguese. The war was won by the Dutch and Fort Zealand was destroyed. The Dutch then rebuilt the fort and named it "New Zelandiaa." The people of Haruku were neutral to both the Portuguese and the Dutch.





In the 1800s, the Dutch governor summoned the kings of the Lease Islands—Saparua, Haruku, and Nusalaut. King Noloth of Saparua, sailing to Tanjung Totu in Haruku, was forced to anchor due to a storm. The anchor broke, and he called for help. King Markus Rijaluang (Rizaluang) of Saparua sought assistance, but the King of Haruku was absent. Instead, he was met by the King of Haruku's daughter, Aihua Pareta (Helena). King Noloth fell in love with her and then continued on to Ambon.

The two kings met in Ambon. On his return, King Noloth stopped at Haruku to return the anchor. He then formally proposed marriage to Aihua Pareta through her father, the King of Haruku, and she accepted. The people and traditional leaders of both Noloth and Haruku approved the union. As King Noloth sailed to Haruku for the wedding, Aihua Pareta suddenly died. The King of Haruku sent Marinyo to Wai Maru to intercept King Noloth and deliver the tragic news. Despite Aihua Pareta's death, King Noloth insisted on the marriage. He proceeded to the King of Haruku's residence, where, at 10 PM, the two kings, through a Dutch priest, exchanged rings between King Noloth and Aihua Pareta's corpse, thus establishing the *pela kawin* (marriage bond) between the people of Haruku and Noloth.

In the 1950s, following Indonesian independence, the separatist Republic of South Maluku (RMS) movement reached Haruku. Many residents fled into the island's forests. A tsunami struck Haruku in 1952, but casualties were relatively low due to the population's displacement in the forests. In the 1970s, the Indonesian government, through Village Law No. 5 of 1979, replaced Haruku's customary governance system with an "administrative village" structure. This undermined local customs and traditions. This system remained in place until the early 2000s, when regional autonomy policies allowed villages to revert to their original governance structures. Haruku returned to its traditional Negeri Haruku system, which remains in place today.

What Do We Mean by Development?

Our Right to Development

We uphold the right to development, ensuring direct community involvement in shaping their future. This is achieved through various participatory methods, including:

- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs);
- Gathering traditional knowledge and narratives;
- Community surveys; and
- Interviews with youth, women, elders, and people with disabilities.

We are trying to build confidence among the Indigenous People and, as our team members are part of the Haruku community, we find them very helpful.

Our Principles of Community Practice

Haruku State still enforces the principles of local wisdom, and one of the most famous is sasi. Sasi is a customary area management rule regulated by kewang (customary police) in managing the territory and natural resources.

The sasi system of rules under kewang consists of two major parts, namely:

1 Natural Resource Management Sasi

- Sea Sasi: Regulates the utilization of resources in the sea.
- Sasi Kali: Regulates the use of the river and how to use river resources, such as fish, sand, stones, bathing behavior, washing, shirts, etc.
- Forest Sasi: Regulates the use of forest resources and how to collect them.

2 Domestic Sasi

Known as sasi dalam negeri which aims to regulate social life and the pattern of inter-community relations within the negeri (villages).

Our Community Development Priorities

Key Challenges We Face and Prioritized Issues That Need To Be Addressed

Our primary challenge is the weather, which requires us to be adaptable and maximize available time. We also adjust to the community's schedule for meetings, respecting their daily activities. Furthermore, we remain neutral regarding internal conflicts, such as those between the elders and the government. We allow them to resolve these issues independently, a process that can be time-consuming as we await a consensus between the two parties.

During the interviews, some participants expressed concerns about sharing their opinions, fearing potential repercussions. We assured them of complete confidentiality, which encouraged them to speak openly.



AMAN Maluku facilitating a community meeting to learn and understand community members' perspectives and opinion about the issues they faced. (Photo by AMAN Maluku)

Our Development Vision

We are continuing the community's existing priority to strengthen food security, as the Haruku Community faces annual floods and other disasters. This direction was informed by comprehensive discussions and surveys that gathered opinions and input from all stakeholders. Our plan specifically includes:

1. Developing state regulations for Customary territory management that will follow up on existing customary territory maps and strengthen the Haruku Indigenous People's position in managing their traditional lands.
2. Coordinating with the Food Crops Agency to implement a temporary food bank program in the Haruku Community.
3. Enhancing Indigenous youth capabilities through training on disaster adaptation and mitigation.
4. Consulting with the Haruku State /Village Government to present progress updates and receive feedback.
5. Engaging with customary institutions, particularly the Kewang Haruku, who have been instrumental in environmental protection efforts.

Community unity and faith in Indigenous self-determination are key to achieving development that respects and reflects local wisdom in all of its forms.

Community Participation in Designing and Implementing Development Plans

Our Roles and Participation in Creating Our Community-led Development Plan

Our role as a team in preparing the plan was to facilitate discussions, provide space for the community itself to give opinions, and listen carefully to what they want. The scenario we prepared involved engaging all stakeholders—youth, women, traditional elders, and people with disabilities—to gather their input and aspirations for their community. This included:

- We conducted interviews with: 5 youth, 10 Indigenous women, 2 elders, and 5 people with disabilities.
- A survey was also conducted with: 10 Indigenous women, 5 men, 2 young women, and 3 young men.



Community meeting with indigenous women. (Photo by AMAN Maluku)

Process of Consultation and Providing Continuous Consent in Our Community

We have prioritized community consultation and approval. All things that are planned are to be discussed together so that all parties have a sense of ownership and responsibility for what is made. We consistently seek their input, recognizing that they will ultimately implement and experience the impacts of any initiatives.

What We Are Asking

1

We call on the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency (ATR/BPN) and the Ministry of Home Affairs to develop state regulations for customary territory management that will follow up on giving full recognition to existing customary territory maps belonging to indigenous peoples and strengthen the Haruku Indigenous People's position in managing their traditional lands.

2

We call on the Ministry of Agriculture and the Directorate General of Food Crops, in coordination with the Maluku Provincial Agriculture Office and also to the Central Maluku Regency Food Crops Office, to support the implementation of the food bank program in Haruku State.

3

We call on the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) of Maluku Province and Central Maluku Regency to enhance Indigenous youth capacity through disaster adaptation and mitigation training to strengthen community resilience in the face of environmental and climate-related challenges.

4

We call on the Maluku Provincial Government and the Maluku District Government to regularly consult with the Haruku State Government (Pemerintah Negeri Haruku) to present progress updates on key policies and receive meaningful feedback from the Indigenous community.

5

We call on the Ministry of Environment and Ministry Forestry, in collaboration with the Maluku Provincial Environmental Agency, to engage with customary institutions, particularly the Kewang Haruku and other Kewang, recognizing their vital role in environmental protection and ensuring their leadership in conservation efforts.

Co-Designed Solutions for and by the
Haruku Community, Maluku, Indonesia

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