

Culture and Language Documentation and Revitalization in Indonesia – the case of Pagu

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Abstract

In this talk I will discuss an example of culture and language documentation and revitalization in Indonesia based on my own experience working with the Pagu community in North Halmahera, North Maluku Province, Indonesia. I started working with the community in 2012 in the framework of an Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) project. When the project finished in 2014, the community raised money to run a similar project on their language and culture and it received funding from a gold mining company named Nusa Halmahera Minerals Ltd for the next four years (2014 -2018). The project is also supported by the local government of Halmahera Utara regency, and soon the three other neighboring communities (Kao, Modole and Boeng) also wanted the same project for their endangered languages and cultures.

Now that after the 1997 Indonesian 'Reformation' Indonesia has a new governmental system, i.e. a shift from the 'centralized' system (in the Soeharto era) to the 'decentralized' one where local governments have more room for developing their own regions. Within this system, more and more communities in the country are becoming more concerned about their languages and cultures (especially those that have been threatened to become extinct in the old system). Most of those communities want to have projects for their cultures and languages. In this talk I also will discuss how academics and researchers can help supporting them.