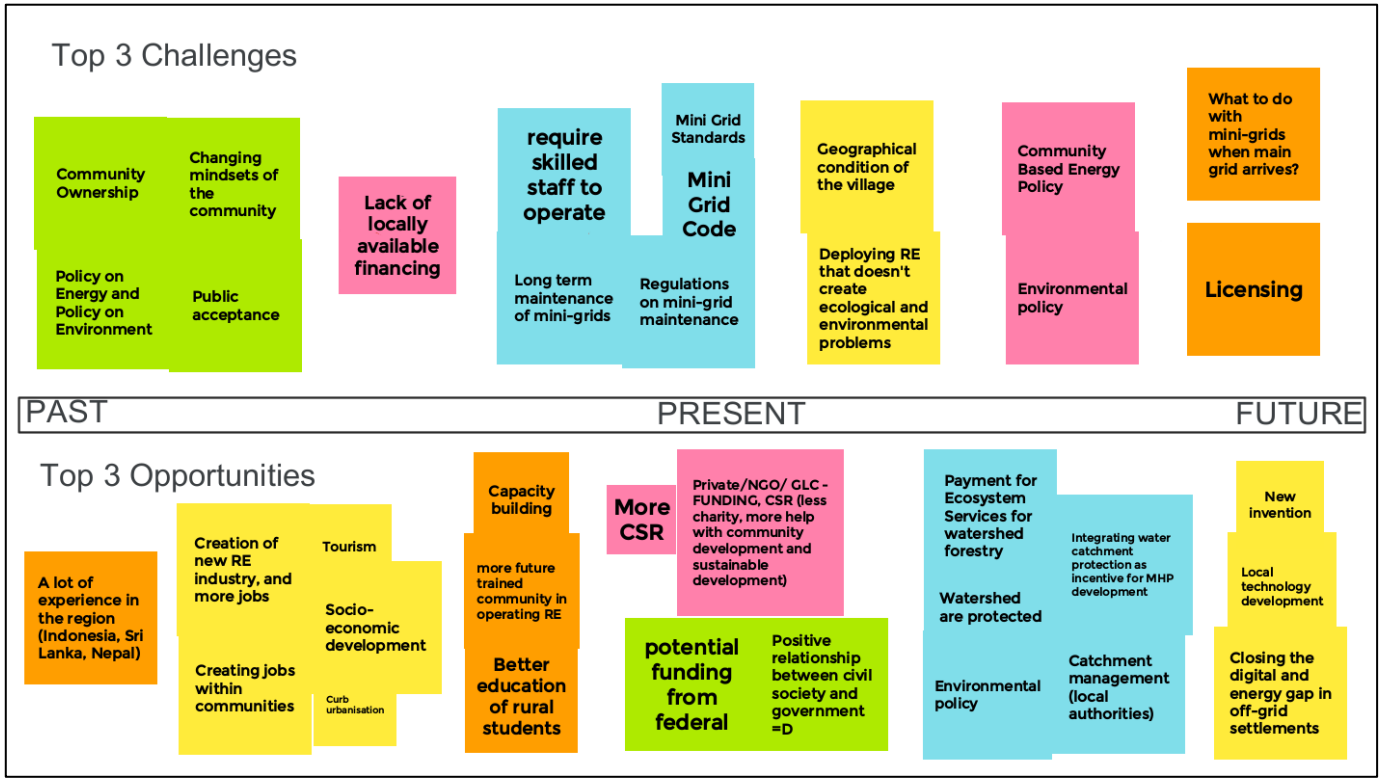
VISIONING SABAH'S FUTURE TOGETHER

Challenges:

Up to now the principal problems have been the lack of policies, public acceptance and financing for the mini-grid approach with renewables, but now our main challenges are around lack of mini-grid regulations, codes and standards as well as inadequate human capacity to operate and maintain such systems. Going forward we need to adapt renewable systems to the ecologies of villages across Sabah, develop enabling policies for driving environmental and community energy progress, and, ultimately, we shall need to address how to integrate and license mini-grids within the state grid.

Method:

Participants at the Sabah RE² High Level Training were each asked to identify their top three challenges and opportunities towards realising rural electrification through renewable energy grids in Sabah. A Google Jamboard discussion then distributed these across a timeline into the future (see image on the right).



Opportunities:

Sabah can build upon considerable experience around the region with achieving this transition. The opportunity right now is to frame this as providing new opportunities for work, education and livelihoods in remote villages, bringing jobs (e.g. in tourism) and associated socio-economic development back from cities to rural areas. There is a hunger in communities to learn and operate systems, and a growing interest in financing such programs across the sectors often in creative partnerships towards sustainable development. Into the future these funding opportunities will likely grow as PES systems including forest watershed management bring additional revenue streams. Longer-term this approach helps Sabah "leapfrog" towards a future with technical innovation that closes the "gap" between the urban grid and the remote rural through digital and energy innovation.