

## EMPOWERMENT OF COMMUNITY AS AN APPROACH OF RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN EAST NUSA TENGGARA

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### ABSTRACT

The geographical condition of East Nusa Tenggara Province which consists of islands is one of the obstacles in infrastructure development. As a solution for several development implementations in rural areas, especially village road infrastructure, village irrigation channels and

water supply installations, the government has implemented a community empowerment policy program as an effort to expedite and involve the community in various matters relating to development in the region. This study uses a qualitative approach with primary data sources derived from resource persons, also using secondary data as supporting sources from documents and reports and studies that have been done before. In this study as a resource person is a stakeholder who is directly involved in the implementation of rural infrastructure project activities. Community empowerment in the development process is a quality development program with an empowerment and community participation approach through the followings: (i) quality development; (ii) in favour with the poor, (iii) autonomous and decentralized; (iv) participative; (v) autoactivity; (vi) compositeness. It was concluded that methods for the approach of community empowering in the construction of rural infrastructure development are: participatory approach, humanity approach and conceptual approach.

**KEYWORDS:** Empowerment, Community, Rural, Infrastructure.

### INTRODUCTION

Poverty is one of principal problems in development in East Nusa Tenggara. There are three factors that cause poverty: (i) government policies and rules that are not pro-poor; (ii) the low

capacity of the community to manage development resources; (iii) geographical conditions (isolation and remoteness) that cause poverty and underdevelopment of the community with other communities.

Since the issuance of the government policy set forth in Presidential Instruction No. 5, year of 1993, known as the Disadvantaged Village Instruction Program (IDT), poverty alleviation programs based on community empowerment have been launched, including: Development of Disadvantaged Village Supporting Infrastructure (P3DT), Regional Empowerment Program in Overcoming The Impact of the Economic Crisis (PDM-DKE), the Kecamatan Development Program (PPK), the Urban Poverty Reduction Program (P2PK), the Community Empowerment Project for Village Development (PMPD / CERD), and various programs carried out by local governments. (Adisasmita, 2006).

Poverty reduction efforts are carried out with a community empowerment approach, which is to provide an opportunity for every community member to participate in the development process by getting the same opportunities and enjoying the results of development. This approach was strengthened by outline direction of the state (GBHN) 2000-2004, namely that poverty alleviation efforts were carried out with the approach that the community had the space to determine the choice of activities that were most suitable for their own progress. This means that in the realization of planning, implementation, utilization and maintenance of development results, community participation is needed.

National poverty reduction strategies contain 4 pillars, namely; (1) expansion of work and business opportunities, (2) community empowerment, (3) improvement of government, private and community capacity, and (4) social protection, the implementation of which must be supported by program implementation. (Mansuri and Rao, 2012).

Conceptually, it has an applied basis in three aspects at once, namely Sectoral Based, Regional Based, and Community Based aspects. In the operational model, it offers a participatory approach through a transparent optimization process (transparency process) in order to achieve measurable goals (accountability).

## MATERIALS AND METHOD

The location of rural infrastructure development project is divided into four large islands in East Nusa Tenggara Province, namely Flores island, Sumba island, Timor and Alor, with 16 districts. Location distribution can be seen on the following map.



**Figure 1: East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia.**

The research method used is a method qualitative research. Qualitative research methods is a method used for explore and understand an issue related to social problems, or in an effort to unravel a complexity the problem through the inductive perspective of the theme specifically to more general themes (Creswell, 2014; Sugiyono, 2013). The research strategy used in this qualitative research is by using a case study approach.

This study uses a qualitative approach with primary data sources derived from resource persons, also using secondary data as supporting sources from documents and reports and studies that have been done before. In this study as a resource person is a stakeholder who is directly involved in the implementation of project activities.

The number of interviewees in this research is flexible, not limited, if it is from snowballing it turns out that other stakeholders are needed in addition to the results of the literature so that information is more complete, it is possible to add. Or vice versa, if there are stakeholders declared irrelevant it will be eliminated. Data collection techniques are done through in-depth interviews, field observations and documentation studies by testing the validity of the data using the Triangulation method.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Empowerment

Community empowerment is essentially a planned change process. The existence of a community empowerment program planning will provide a framework that can be used as a reference by all stakeholders (including community members) to make decisions about activities that should be carried out in order to achieve the desired development goals (Mardikanto & Soebiato, 2012).

Suharto (2004), explain as conceptually empowerment comes from the word 'power' (power or empowerment). Because the main idea of empowerment is in contact with the concept of power. Power is often associated with our ability to make others do what we want, regardless of their desires and interests.

#### 1. Empowerment Approach Model

The implementation of the process and the achievement of the empowerment goals are achieved through the application of the empowerment approach. Parsons (1994), states that the empowerment process is generally carried out collectively. According to him, there is no literature that states that the empowerment process occurs in a one-on-one relationship between workers and clients in individual relief settings. Therefore, in a social context, empowerment can be done through three dimensions of an approach namely:

##### a. Micro Approach

Empowerment is carried out on individual clients through guidance, counseling, stress management, crisis intervention. The main goal is to guide or train clients in carrying out the tasks of life. This model is often referred to as a task centered approach.

##### b. Mezzo Approach

Empowerment is carried out on a group of clients. Empowerment is done by using groups as an intervention medium. Group dynamics education and training is usually used as a strategy to increase client awareness, knowledge, skills and attitudes so that they have the ability to solve the problems at hand.

##### c. Macro Approach

This approach is also referred to as large system strategy because the target of change is directed at the wider environmental system. The formulation of social planning policies, campaigns, social action, lobbying, organizing, conflict management are some of the strategies in this approach. This approach views the client as someone who has the

competence to understand their own situations and to choose and determine the right strategy for action.

## 2. Empowerment Dimensions

Kieffer (1984) suggested there are three dimensions of empowerment namely: (a). popular competence; (b). sociopolitical ability; (c). participatory competence.

Meanwhile, according to Parsons et al. (1994), empowerment includes at least three dimensions:

- a. A development process that starts from individual growth which then develops into a greater social change.
- b. A psychological state that is characterized by self-confidence, useful and able to control themselves and others.
- c. Liberation resulting from a social movement that began with the education and politicization of the weak and then involved the collective efforts of these weak people to gain power and change structures that were still pressing.

### Change in Development Planning Pattern

In the 1980s, the top down planning was used in the preparation of the National Budget, which was carried out by government officials in the regions. Since the Minister of Home Affairs issued instruction No. 4; year of 1979 which was later strengthened to become Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs No. 2; year of 1982 concerning Planning for Supervision and Control of Regional Development Projects (P5D), arranged the annual planning process as a process from the community to the government.

Since the beginning of the six edition of five-year development plan as known as Repelita VI, as the implementation of Long-Term Development II after Long-Term Development I was completed, ideas emerged to accelerate efforts to reduce the number of poor people. There is a policy of providing capital assistance to the poor in disadvantaged villages in the form of capital assistance and assistance.

After providing assistance, in 1994/1995 it was deemed necessary to support the village with infrastructure development, so starting from 1995/1996 infrastructure development efforts to support underdeveloped villages became known as the Disadvantaged Village Infrastructure Development Program (DVIDP).

In the implementation of DVIDP, the planning policy was drastically changed. This program no longer uses top down planning patterns but is reversed into bottom up planning patterns. Basically, this rural infrastructure development will run according to the spirit of DVIDP, which is a bottom up planning pattern or more popularly known as the pattern of community empowerment.

The implementation of rural infrastructure development is based on the concept of community empowerment by developing the potential of existing communities through learning activities of community groups formed by:

1. Providing opportunities to the community / community groups / community institutions, more access to other actors in order to develop the existing potential and open themselves to the opportunities provided by other actors related to their conditions.
2. Increase community capacity in the form of creating training and educational opportunities both technical and non-technical.
3. Providing opportunities for the community / community groups / community institutions to be able to control the existing assets, especially in terms of management so that the infrastructure that has been built can be a sustainable asset.

### **3. Community Empowerment Approach.**

There are 3 (three) approaches to increase the capacity of community members and the institutional system to have the ability to overcome the problems they face, namely a participatory approach, humanity approach and conceptual approach.

#### **a. Participatory Approach**

In tackling the problem of managing commodities and other problems by a community, citizens are invited to understand the problem according to their own perceptions, to know the cause and effect of the problem, know and realize, and invite them to solve the problem based on the existing potential and access the potential of external resources (funds, technology and markets and other information). To overcome this method used to do the above is by Participatory Action Research (PAR).

Various media that are known to the local community are used in the process of planning and implementing activities. Field staff (facilitators) in the planning process and in carrying out activities act as catalysts, facilitators and networking with various parties who have the potential to work together or partner in implementing activities that still need outside help.

### b. Humanity Approach

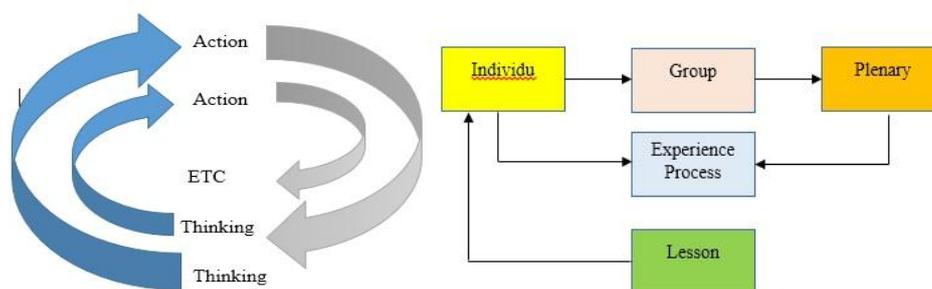
Humans in essence are subjects, not sufferers or objects, who act consciously to overcome the problems and the reality they face. Because the problem and reality that exists is not something that exists by itself, and must be accepted according to what it is as a fate or inevitable fate, a kind of myth. Humans must wrestle with these problems and realities with critical attitude and creativity. This means the need for an orientative attitude which is the development of the language of the mind, which is able to understand its existence with its environment to make changes and real thoughts and actions.

Humans have an instinct, awareness, personality and existence itself, besides having limitations. With his human nature, one must be able to overcome the boundary situations that constrain him. If someone gives up resigning to the boundary situation, especially without any endeavor and awareness, then he is no longer human.

And someone living in the world with other people as a community, then the reality of "being together" must be lived in the process of "becoming" in an integrated manner to become a complete human being.

The process of human liberation from situations that constrain it by the process of awareness about self-reality and its environment through a process of learning on the basis of action and thinking that takes place continuously.

The description of the learning cycle is as follows:



with proposals from below, while top down, all aspects of management are determined from above.

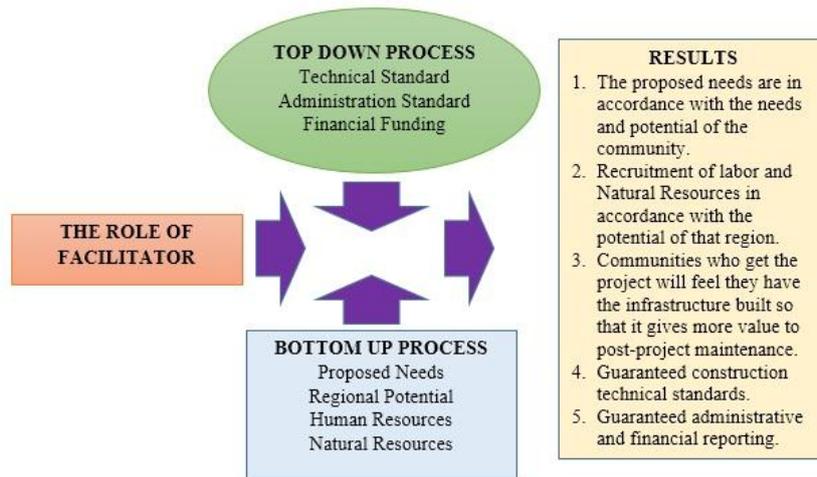
In the work context, the bottom up approach is not yet accustomed to being implemented and will cause the sustainability of the use of infrastructure to be built is not guaranteed. Meanwhile, the top down approach is very difficult to develop community participation, especially since the community has been able to assess the quality of the work that has been done "forced" by not involving community participation.

Thus for the implementation of this work, a "middle ground" conception approach is used, namely the use of bottom up and top down proportionally, in the sense that:

- All infrastructure proposals are in accordance with the needs and potential that exists in the area.
- In the process of preparing project proposals, it has been known for a long time using bottom up planning, namely the existence of the *development coordination meeting* process from the lowest to the highest level.
- In carrying out the work, there are enough skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers available, especially when the community is not working according to the season.

Based on the above considerations, the use of these methods will provide benefits:

- ✓ The proposed needs are in accordance with the needs and potential of the community.
- ✓ Absorption of labor and natural resources, in accordance with the existing potential in the location.
- ✓ People who get the project will still feel ownership of the infrastructure built which will certainly provide more value in post-project maintenance.
- ✓ Guaranteed construction technical standards.
- ✓ Guaranteed administrative and financial reporting standards.



**Figure 3: Conceptual Approach Process.**

This is in accordance with the explanation of Tohidi and Jabbari (2012) that in the empowerment process it is necessary to pay attention to important aspects, namely a sense of competence, a sense of autonomy, a sense of effectiveness, a sense of worth and trust so that the empowerment process can run as expected.

**Community Empowerment Strategy in Rural Infrastructure Development Project**

Three levels of attention are related to efforts to increase the capacity of Local Government (Capacity Building). The three levels of attention are the System level, Institutional level and Individual level.

	Design Aspect	Implementation Aspect	Utilization and Maintenance Aspect
System	Level I: Effectivity Work System, the system in achieving desired goals		
Institution	Level II: Institutions, Tasks Improved		
Individual	Level III: Individual, ability of personnel to understand and carry out their duties properly		

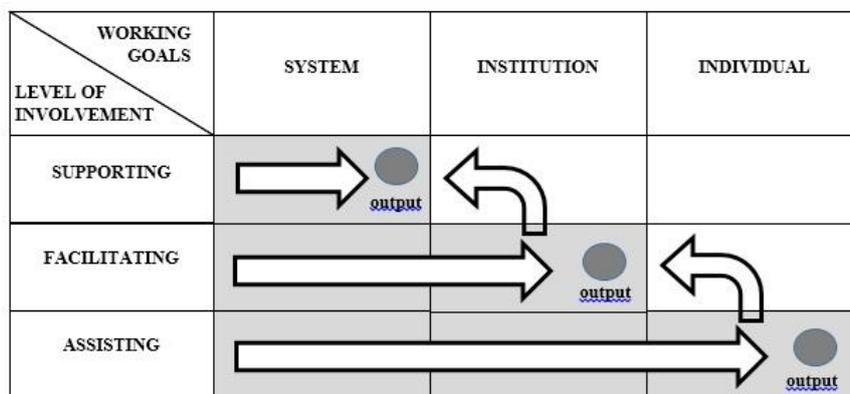
**Figure 4: Three Level of Capacity Building.**

As shown in the picture above, the perspective of the substance of Capacity Building is related to aspects of planning, aspects of implementation, utilization and control aspects.

- The highest level is the SYSTEM level, then successively the Institution level, and the Individual level. The three levels mentioned have different duration of treatment time, and the impact at one level influences the other levels.

- The system level has broader and complex handling needs, and changes in System performance are influenced by changes at the Institution level, as well as changes at the Institution level influenced by the Individual level.
- Due to the duration of handling time and its different complexity, it is necessary to adapt the handling method at each level.

In its implementation, it is necessary to apply three types of handling methods at each level, namely the supporting method, the facilitating method, and the assisting method.



**Figure 5: The concept of involvement in 3 levels.**

Building capacity must be seen from the ability to achieve a certain performance as a goal to be achieved. In this achievement will provide outputs (outputs) and results (outcomes). In addition, efforts to build capacity must be placed in a dynamic framework, and must be continually reviewed throughout the effort. The character of the Capacity Building activity is dynamic, so a management implementation strategy is needed that is quite flexible with developments and changes that occur, both concerning variations of the issues in the several districts covered, as well as the development of the situation during program implementation in a Regency.

#### ***System Level***

Provide a policy and regulatory framework for regional government decision-making tools (executive and legislative) in the effort to carry out tasks related to regional development.

#### ***Institution / Institution Level***

Provide a management framework for management tools in accordance with their duties and functions related to regional development and regional sectors.

***Individual level***

Provide a framework for developing ethos and work capability and personnel competence in carrying out their duties.

The three handling patterns provide flexibility for the demands of the needs at each level, so that they are in accordance with the character of dynamic Capacity Building activities.

***Supporting***

This pattern provides input in the form of support for activities that are "formulation policy and decision making process". The Assistance Team only provided material inputs and strategic support so that the process could run well and smoothly. And not involved in the process itself, because it involves normative decisions and sometimes is political.

***Facilitating***

Somewhat different from the pattern of Support, the facilitating work pattern emphasizes work involvement in the context of carrying out the functions and tasks of the planning agency / agency. Therefore, the mediation work pattern (facilitation) directs its activities to things that are "strengthening activities work process prior to its function and role". In this case, the Assistance Team will be involved in several work activities to improve the performance of the functions and tasks of the planning agency.

***Assisting***

This supporting work pattern is a more active pattern and has direct targets for individuals or personnel related to planning tasks. In this case, the Assistance Team provides assistance in the form of direct joint work to related individuals in connection with the completion of their duties. Therefore, this last work pattern directs its activities more to "*transferring attitudes, skills, and knowledge to each individual in order to improve their job's performance*".

**CONCLUSION**

1. The process of empowerment in development community empowerment based infrastructure not the same between one village and another, depends on the characteristics of the community and the needs of the community itself, so that community empowerment programs should be not beaten evenly by each village. Strengthening very institutional in the community group needed for the empowerment process sustainable.

2. The participatory development model can be carried out by empowering the community in the process of rural infrastructure development, in order to assist efforts to reduce poverty.
3. The pattern of implementation of rural infrastructure development based on community participation is carried out using the participatory approach the humanity approach and the conceptual approach.
4. Before any work is carried out by involving the community, socialization needs to be held so that the community can know the ins and outs of the planned activities and forms of their involvement.
5. For empowerment to run optimally, it is necessary to approach the community leaders, youth leaders and religious leaders in each location.
6. Even though the community has been entrusted with managing activities, there is still a need for guidance and evaluation from relevant agencies.

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