

## Kokoda Muslim Community Empowerment: A Social Intervention in Sorong City, West Papua

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### ABSTRACT

Muslims in Kokoda have a reputation for being economically disadvantaged and technologically illiterate. Despite the fact that they are well-known to possess advantageous cultural assets and natural resources that can be utilized to enhance their standard of living. Consequently, the Kokoda Muslim community in Sorong City, West Papua, will be the focus of this research as it examines the theoretical tactics and concepts of empowerment-based social intervention. In order to help people live better and be more self-reliant, this course will explain social intervention and community empowerment in general and then propose theoretical solutions for interventions that are based on empowerment. A theoretical technique of empowerment-based social intervention, R-O-N (Resources, Organizing and Norms), was discovered as a result of this research.

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## INTRODUCTION

There has long been a preponderance of the equalization by increased growth paradigm in development thought and paradigm shifts. Assuming a trickle-down effect, this paradigm states that the lowest-level people will benefit from growth and equity. Unfortunately, the lower class did not relish the distribution of development outcomes, contrary to expectations, based on the experience of development during the three decades (1940–1970). Marcantonio (2013) states on page fourteen that... Even though People Centered Development aims to make the community the focal point and primary actors in community development, this is not always the case. This is an inevitable result of the lack of participation of lower-level employees in program development and evaluation. Development programs do not take into account their needs, interests, and objectives.

Human beings are both the principal focus and the most valuable asset, according to the people-centered view of development. Hence, development should not be based on a sacred promise, but on a deliberate effort to promote people's power by increasing their capacities and potentials and engaging them in decision-making about issues impacting their lives. This will end the dependency that has been fostered by the relationship between the State bureaucracy and the people. In addition to meeting their basic necessities, they also have needs related to self-esteem and reaching their full potential. At its most fundamental level, human dignity is violated when a person is unable to meet their most fundamental requirements. Someone whose basic physiological requirements are satisfied is also considered dehumanized on a secondary level. This is according to Soetomo (2013) on page 71.

Natural resources are Papua's main claim to fame. The people's lifestyles are in stark contrast to the riches of these natural resources. The poverty line is extremely low for almost 80% of Papuans. (Malak, Stefanus, 2015: 50–51). Sorong and the rest of West Papua are remarkably similar. Possibilities exist in both the local and global markets because of this city's abundant natural resources. Further, the Papuan people, and the Muslim population of Kokoda in particular, have deeply held cultural beliefs that might serve as a source of social capital to enhance the standard of living in the region. For example, a strong sense of unity and sacrifice, a readiness to bear one another's burdens, a steadfast adherence to one's cultural heritage, a respect for diversity, and a high level of tolerance. (Sujadi Firman et al., 2015: 56). The majority of the Kokoda Muslim population in KM.8 Sorong City, however, continues to have a negative reputation as a poor and unsettling ethnic minority.

Both poor and unpredictable income and the traits of lazy individuals contribute to the poverty that the Kokoda Muslim community experiences. According to Abdul Rahman et al. (2013: 33). The majority of Kokoda inhabitants work in agriculture or in part-time jobs. They are thereby relegated to the roles of raw material producers and final product consumers. A culture that celebrates vices like free sex, gambling, drinking, and hedonism only serves to heighten this sluggish disposition. Along with poverty, disparity in

income, and lack of education, the Kokoda people also face gender stereotypes and the marginalization of women (Akramunnisa, 2013: 2).

A number of factors can worsen social inequality and marginalization if population quality of life is not prioritized alongside social and economic progress. Therefore, novel approaches are required to guarantee that every individual in society can partake in the advantages of economic progress. In order to fully utilize the community's natural resources, it is necessary to employ a strategic approach at the implementation level. This method involves seeing the community as both an object and a subject in problem identification, planning, and implementation. Empowerment programs are one way to do this. The goal of this empowerment activity is to help the Muslim community of Kokoda become more self-reliant and powerful so that they can better deal with outside forces. This will be achieved by boosting their motivation and engagement, raising their awareness of the issues they face and the wealth of potential they possess, and strengthening their socio-economic institutions.

There is a tight relationship between social intervention and the idea of empowerment. In this age of reform and regional autonomy, the concept of social intervention is gaining more and more attention as a development strategy that can help transform people from passive observers to active participants in setting goals, managing resources, and influencing processes that have a systematic impact on their lives (Moore, et al. 2018). The very definition of empowerment is encapsulated in the description. The goal of intervention-based empowerment is to fortify not just people but also the institutions that support them in their communities. Bringing in contemporary cultural values like honesty, transparency, responsibility, and frugality; revitalizing social institutions; and incorporating them into development efforts. As a whole, it's an attempt at communal empowerment.

In order to improve the living conditions of the Muslim population in Kokoda, it is necessary to intervene through empowerment programs that cater to their interests. In general, the government and social institutions in Kokoda have provided numerous empowerment programs to the Muslim population. But the Muslim community of Kokoda is still in the same boat and things haven't changed much. When it comes to economics, the Muslim community in Kokoda has been unable to compete with either migrants or other indigenous Papuans. Sorong City, West Papua's Muslim Kokoda community is the target of the author's intervention efforts aimed at empowering them.

The above historical context makes it clear that the Muslim population of Kokoda is still mired in abject poverty and lack of progress. Socioeconomically, they still can't compete with migrants or even fellow indigenous Papuans. It is somewhat ironic considering the substantial support they have gotten from government and non-governmental organization empowerment programs. There are still prejudices within the empowerment program that have sparked public disputes; for instance, there is some disagreement about whether the program's definition of meaning and function is appropriate for the profession. Reason being, non-governmental organizations' paradigms are distinct. Working on physical projects that perpetuate reliance and produce moral

hazard can damage the community's attitude because it does not educate in the long run; this is also the case with the phrase empowerment. We chose this title to help people understand social intervention and community empowerment more generally, and to provide some theoretical answers for interventions that are based on empowerment and aim to improve people's quality of life and their ability to be independent in their communities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The goal of social intervention is to assist individuals when they are unable to fulfill their social responsibilities due to factors both internal and external to themselves. According to Boediman Hardjomarsonoe (2004). At the individual, group, and community levels, this social intervention seeks to implement a planned change that can be evaluated for effectiveness through social engineering. The goal of these adjustments is to make people feel more connected to one another, reduce social distances, and enhance social functioning so that everyone may do their part to make society and their social environment a better place. The goal of the intervention is to help adults and teenagers find jobs so that they can support themselves and their families (Dunst & trivette, 2019). Furthermore, according to Annisa et al. (2020), one of the factors that contribute to the intervention's effectiveness is the involvement of different stakeholders who are willing to work together to address individual needs by linking them to community resources.

One way to help the helpless is through community empowerment (Feste & Anderson, 1995). When individuals gain the strength to actively participate in shaping the institutions and events that impact their life, this is called empowerment. One key component of empowerment is ensuring that individuals have the resources they need to make positive changes in their own lives and the lives of those they care about. A key component of development is empowering women (Duflo, 2012).

The goal of community empowerment is to give local communities more say in how their resources are used, whether that's through collective action or networking, so that they can become economically, ecologically, and socially independent. This will allow them to keep using their own knowledge and experience, as well as adopt new ideas that help their families and neighbors. There are still prejudices in this empowerment program, and they have sparked public arguments over issues like whether the program's meaning and function are appropriate for the field. The reason behind this is that NGOs have developed a unique perspective. Performing physical projects and fostering reliance has become the very definition of empowerment.

Community Development (CD) and Community Organizing (CO) are two forms of empowerment that we will discuss. CD is a neighborhood plan that puts an emphasis on the built environment. Community development is an approach to self-determination that places an emphasis on building and enhancing social and economic infrastructure. Nutrition education, counseling on family planning, building latrines and roads, financial aid, classroom supplies, and so on are all examples of what is needed. At the same time,

community organizing is a new movement that puts an emphasis on developing critical thinking skills and tapping into the power of local expertise. Development of communities through democratic discourse or discussion is a top priority for CO (Esrom Aritonang, 2013: 9).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Type of Research**

This study employs a descriptive research strategy based on qualitative data. This indicates that researchers do not employ a statistical or mathematical approach while divulging information and data (Maleong, 2006). Gathering as much information and data as possible on the topic at hand is the goal of qualitative research. Since this study is concerned with social interventions pertinent to the research problem, it falls within the descriptive research category, which seeks to provide an objective description.

### **Location or Object of Research**

Kokoda Muslim Community members in KM. 8 Sorong City, West Papua, were chosen as the site of the researcher's investigation. Participants in this study included women, young people, community and religious leaders, members of the general public, and representatives from various levels of government and other interested parties.

### **Data Type and Source**

The researchers used a descriptive study design and gathered information from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was gathered through on-the-ground observations and in-depth interviews with relevant stakeholders about the subject of study. Sources for secondary data on the Empowerment Program include government program records and papers from earlier studies.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

According to Bungin (2013), data is "information material about something" (2013: 123). Methods of observation, interviews, and documentation formed the basis of this study's data collection.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

This study will adopt a data-intensive methodology that involves sifting through reams of information gleaned from primary sources, secondary sources, and field observations. Following that, we will gather relevant theoretical approaches and social intervention phases.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Theoretical Strategies and Stages of Empowerment-Based Social Intervention in Kokoda Muslim Communities in Sorong City, West Papua**

In order to transform a community's powerlessness into empowerment, there are a number of community intervention initiatives that are being planned

and executed. Lessening exposure in order to gain freedom. Based on what the Muslims of Kokoda have seen, national-level empowerment programs still prioritize top-down infrastructure material aid over bottom-up approaches, meaning that the people who know their problems inside and out aren't heard. Consequently, this social intervention aims to empower the community through a community organizing program. This program focuses on developing critical awareness and utilizing the community's local knowledge to empower the community, giving them a stronger bargaining position and more independence. The goal of enhancing community critical awareness and capacity is to help members recognize and make the most of their existing resources and institutions in a way that honors and values their traditional knowledge, practices, and beliefs.

The stages of implementing social intervention are as follows:

#### ***Observation and Mapping of Regional Potential***

A facilitator or helper introduces themselves and observes the aided area in the first step. Get to know the local administration, community leaders, religious figures, and social community institutions first. Members of the community and the facilitator mapped out the area's possibilities at this point. A good example of this is the abundance of underutilised farmland in the Kokoda community settlement region.

#### ***Determination of Issue/Source of Problem***

Next, the facilitator and community members engage in joint debates, also called the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) approach, to investigate and identify the primary sources of the socio-economic issues faced by the Muslim community of Kokoda. This comes after the area's potential has been mapped out. In this way, the community may identify and internalize the root reasons of its problems rather than having them imposed upon it by prejudiced outsiders. At this point, the community is working with the help of a facilitator to try to bring attention to a long-ignored problem that is hiding behind seemingly insignificant issues.

The Kokoda Muslim community's issue with poverty and underdevelopment is reflected in their high reliance on government assistance, their lack of motivation to achieve, their disinterest in education, their lack of entrepreneurial spirit, their failure to utilize vacant land, and their frequent offending behavior.

#### ***Critical Awareness***

At this point in the intervention paradigm, the facilitator's job is to try to bring the many potential resources in the community into harmony with the previously identified problems. The community is encouraged to come together in contemplation and realize that every problem has a solution, and that the most effective solution is the one that originates from within and finds a way to fix it without relying on other forces. Bringing attention to the fact that they possess an abundance of untapped human, social, and environmental resources that could be controlled independently.

Because some members of the Kokoda Muslim community reside in hilly regions and others along the shore, the region is well-known for its abundant natural resources. Moreover, the Kokoda Muslim community still holds on to its cultural values, which include gotong royong, high tolerance, unity and sacrifice, sharing of hardships, preservation of traditions and ancestral heritage, and pluralism. To bring about the required transformation, these cultural values should be used as social capital.

### ***Action Plan***

Participation from all parties, including the chief as the leader of the indigenous community, community leaders, religious leaders, and members of the grassroots community, is crucial to the success of social intervention planning for the empowerment of the Kokoda Muslim community. This is because ideas regarding the desired change need legitimacy or approval during the action planning process. Thus, at this point, the facilitator asks everyone in the community to select a leader and come up with a strategy to address the major issue that has been decided upon collectively. They help the community figure out what they're going to do, when they're going to do it, how much it will cost, and who will be in charge of each task so that they may work together as a unit and foster a sense of oneness.

### ***Activity Implementation***

Given the emphasis on community self-reliance in this intervention process, it is anticipated that the community will take the lead in identifying problems, developing action plans, and carrying out each step of the plan using their existing resources in a manner consistent with community values and social norms.

The common perception is that problems are best approached with a long-term, methodical approach. Consequently, based on the priority of each detected problem, they will be solved in sequence. However, we will make every effort to resolve any issue. In light of the issues highlighted in the preceding section, the following measures are required of the Muslim community of Kokoda:

1. Serving as an advocate and source of inspiration by helping them overcome obstacles including illiteracy, lack of life values, and needs-based schooling and by bolstering their perspective
2. Building community skills and abilities (life skills) to improve social capital. Training to start a grocery store, become a successful fisherman, or make use of undeveloped land by cultivating crops are all examples of what is possible.
3. Hold a workshop or other specific training session for young people to help them develop their potential.
4. Information about how to live a healthy lifestyle
5. Free preschools and kindergartens for the younger kids
6. Sixthly, bolstering institutions

7. Establish alliances between the community, government, and capital owners
8. Fostering an entrepreneurial spirit
9. Assessing and Supervising

The process of deciding how to rank an item, circumstance, event, or set of observed variables is known as assessment, and the word "evaluation" is commonly thought of as its synonym (Mardikanto, 2013: 264). Assessment and monitoring are thus presented here as interdependent phases of the author's work. This empowerment social intervention program's success indicators are as follows:

- a. The financial resources come from community self-help initiatives.
- b. The actual turnout for each planned event
- c. The growth of a wide range of employable talents
- d. The quantity and variety of ideas generated by members of the community
- e. Planning a wide range of community events and activities, including workshops, bake sales, and culinary menus
- f. The formation of equitable partnerships among communities, governments, and capital owners (network development)
- g. A decrease in the number of students dropping out of school
- h. The cleanliness of residential areas
- i. Once the facilitator departs, the community's ability to rely on itself will continue to thrive.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aspect of artificial poverty – poverty that is both caused by and directed at humans – is significant when viewed through the lens of the Kokoda Muslim community. The remedy is not one-time-only because this problem necessitates thorough handling as a structural element. A lengthy procedure and the backing of all relevant parties are necessary. First, by critically bringing attention to both the external and internal situations they encounter, the author of this research on empowered social intervention aims to accommodate two crucial things. The second step is to establish an equitable partnership relationship among the community, the government, and the capital owners once the community has reached a crucial degree of knowledge of the need to maximize the utilization of resources, organizations, and norms.

## FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so further research on the topic still needs to be carried out “Kokoda Muslim Community Empowerment: A Social Intervention in Sorong City, West Papua.”

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