

Community Economic Empowerment for the Creation of Self-Sufficient Villages

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Abstract. Community empowerment is a strategic effort aimed at improving the knowledge and skills of individuals within a community to foster self-reliance and sustainable development. This study focuses on an empowerment initiative conducted in Blarang Village, Tutar District, Pasuruan Regency, chosen for its potential to become an independent village. The empowerment program was structured in two phases: material counseling and focus group discussions (FGDs). Material counseling sessions provided theoretical insights, while the FGDs facilitated interactive discussions to identify local challenges and solutions. The activities resulted in increased knowledge and skills among the participants, as evidenced by their engagement and feedback during both the counseling and discussion sessions. Key topics included agriculture, entrepreneurship, and community organization, which are crucial for the village's progress towards independence. The empowerment initiative demonstrated that structured educational programs could positively impact community self-sufficiency. By actively participating in the process, the community members expressed optimism about applying the skills and knowledge gained to enhance their village's development. The program succeeded in providing the community with tools and strategies to work towards becoming an independent village. These efforts can serve as a model for similar rural development projects aimed at empowering communities to achieve self-reliance.

Keywords: Community empowerment; Blarang Village; Independent village; Focus group discussion (FGD); Rural development

1. Introduction

Empowerment is an ongoing process of enhancing the abilities and independence of the community to improve their living standards. The term 'empowerment' originates from the word 'daya,' which means strength. In this context, it refers to providing power and resources to groups of people who currently lack the strength to meet their basic

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daily needs (Alhada et al., 2021; Utami & Prasetyo, 2020). When applied within a community, empowerment must be accompanied by community participation and initiative in starting social activities to improve their individual situations and conditions. Community empowerment activities will be successful if residents participate.

In the national development framework, community empowerment from various aspects should be a primary focus and a shared responsibility. Building the economy of rural communities also means developing the majority of the Indonesian population. In addition to human resources, rural areas also possess valuable natural resources that must be utilized effectively. For this reason, an index classifies villages into several groups, with the highest standard being an independent village. An independent village is one that has adequate access to basic services, sufficient infrastructure, good transportation, effective public services, and excellent administration, with a Village Development Index (IPD) above 75 (Presiden RI, 2014).

This empowerment activity aims to elevate village standards to a higher level. Active empowerment activities are carried out by several organizations and government institutions, such as: B. Community Empowerment in Building Independent Villages, Entrepreneurship through Masako Smart Post (Active, Creative, Innovative Community) in Patuhu Village, Randangan District, Pohuwato Regency (Saleh, Hasim, & Suleman, 2023), Community Empowerment Strategy for Kebun Village towards Independent Villages through Optimization of Peanut Cultivation (Kurniyanti, Destiarni, & Arifiyanti, 2023), Community Empowerment Strategy in Implementing Independent Energy Villages Program (Aisah & Herdiansyah, 2020), Community Empowerment towards Independent Villages by Enhancing Economic and Cultural Potential During Covid-19 Pandemic (Irwanto, 2021), Community Economic Empowerment in Realizing Independent Villages in Banjar Jaya Village (Simangunsong, Perwira, & Apriani, 2019), Independent Village Development through Community Participation in Pattalassang District, Gowa Regency (Fatmawati, Hakim, & Mappamiring, 2020), Strategy to Build Independent Villages by Optimizing the Use of Village Resources (DD) Based on Locality in South Buton Regency (Hak, 2020), Empowering SMEs in Realizing Independent Villages in Segunung Village, Dlanggu District, Mojokerto (Setyariningsih & Utami, 2022), Strategy to Accelerate the Development of Independent Villages (Nur Arifah & Kusumastuti, 2019), Economic Empowerment of Community through Cottage Industry (Yuniarsih et al., 2021), Community Empowerment in Promoting Village Potential (Case Study in Parungserab Village, Bandung Regency) (Widharetno Mursalim & STIA LAN Bandung, 2016), Community Empowerment in Puton Watu Ngelak Tourism Village from the Perspective of Group Dynamics (Tri Yunandar, Purwono, & Indriya Wati, 2019).

The Pasuruan Regency, especially Blarang Village in the Tukur District, has great potential to become an independent village. From the perspective of the community, it has the opportunity to develop with strong support from the village authorities. In addition to Unitomo KKN activities in 2016, Unitomo students in Tukur Village took the initiative to hold consultations on community economic empowerment aimed at realizing independent villages.

2. Methods

The method of implementation in this community empowerment program was designed to actively engage participants and foster a deep understanding of the material presented. It consisted of two key stages: community counseling and socialization,



followed by focused group discussions (FGDs). The first stage involved delivering educational sessions aimed at empowering the community members. The goal of the counseling was not only to transfer knowledge but also to build the community's capacity to make informed decisions and take actions that directly impact their well-being. The counseling sessions were designed to help participants develop competencies in decision-making and practical actions that could influence their community's growth. Additionally, these sessions addressed personal and social barriers that might hinder action by providing tools and strategies to overcome these challenges. By increasing the community's confidence and ability to utilize available resources and local power structures effectively, the program aimed to foster self-reliance. During this stage, comprehensive explanations were given on key topics relevant to the community's development, such as economic initiatives, agricultural techniques, or social organization, depending on the local context.

After the counseling sessions, participants were divided into smaller groups to facilitate more interactive and detailed discussions. Each group engaged in discussions about the material presented earlier to ensure that participants fully understood the content of the counseling by encouraging active participation. This approach provided a platform for participants to share their perspectives, ask questions, and discuss how they could apply the new knowledge in their community. The discussions were also tailored to address the specific needs or challenges faced by different subgroups within the community. This participatory method encouraged community members to actively engage in the learning process and take ownership of the knowledge gained, increasing the likelihood of successful implementation and long-term community development.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Community Economic Empowerment Activities

Community service activities in the form of counseling on community empowerment in Blarang Village, Tukur District, Pasuruan Regency, were attended by 28 residents. The training material was a PowerPoint presentation titled "Community Economic Empowerment in Realizing Independent Villages". Community service activities in the form of counseling on community empowerment in Blarang Village, Tukur District, Pasuruan Regency, were well-received, with 28 residents in attendance. These activities aimed to enhance the community's capacity to develop their village into an independent and self-sufficient one. The participants, representing various segments of the village, were engaged in an interactive learning process, reflecting the collective effort to uplift the community's socio-economic conditions. The core of the training was delivered through a PowerPoint presentation titled "Community Economic Empowerment in Realizing Independent Villages." This presentation covered critical aspects of community empowerment, focusing on practical economic strategies that the village could adopt to achieve self-reliance. The training aimed to equip residents with knowledge about utilizing local resources, fostering entrepreneurship, and encouraging collaborative efforts within the community to address challenges and seize opportunities for development.

Throughout the event, visuals such as figure 1 and figure 2. Display the number of residents present during the implementation of the community empowerment activity. These images illustrated the high level of community participation, underscoring the



collective enthusiasm and commitment of the villagers to the initiative. The active engagement of these residents is a positive indicator of their readiness to embrace new ideas and contribute to the overall goal of becoming an independent village.



Figure 1 Community Economic Empowerment Activities in Realizing Independent Village

Community Economic Empowerment activities are vital initiatives aimed at improving the economic capabilities of a community to foster self-reliance and sustainability. These activities help communities leverage their resources, develop skills, and adopt strategies to drive local economic growth. In the context of realizing an independent village, these efforts focus on strengthening local industries, promoting entrepreneurship, and encouraging collective efforts to improve overall living standards. Such initiatives often involve capacity-building programs like training sessions, workshops, and counseling to enhance the knowledge and skills of the community members. These programs empower residents by teaching them how to utilize available resources efficiently, whether through agriculture, small-scale businesses, or other forms of local economic activity. By fostering collaboration and innovation, the community learns how to address challenges collectively, while also identifying opportunities for sustainable development.

The ultimate goal of Community Economic Empowerment is to create a self-sustaining community that does not rely heavily on external aid. By equipping individuals with the tools to generate income, manage resources, and work together, these activities lay the foundation for long-term growth. This leads to an independent village that can thrive socially and economically, ensuring a better quality of life for its residents. Furthermore, empowerment activities foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members. Through collaborative efforts, the community learns to work together, pooling resources and sharing knowledge for collective benefit. This cooperative spirit is essential in achieving long-term success and sustainability. For instance, forming



cooperatives or community-based enterprises can enhance productivity and give villagers access to broader markets. These efforts contribute to building a local economy that is resilient and adaptive, even in the face of external challenges. In the end, the goal of these activities is not only to improve the economic situation but to create a community where people feel empowered to shape their future and achieve lasting independence.



Figure 1 Community enthusiasm in participating in empowerment activities

During the discussion sessions following the consultation, the residents' enthusiasm was clearly evident through their numerous questions and responses. Although the residents asked rather unique questions, the moderator made every effort to provide clear answers to ensure they fully understood the material.

Community enthusiasm in participating in empowerment activities reflects the willingness and eagerness of local residents to engage in initiatives that aim to improve their social and economic conditions. This enthusiasm often stems from the community's recognition of the potential benefits such activities bring, such as enhanced skills, new knowledge, and opportunities for growth. When individuals see a direct connection between their participation and the improvement of their daily lives, they are more motivated to take part actively.

Enthusiasm can also be fueled by a sense of ownership and involvement in decision-making processes. When empowerment activities are designed to be inclusive, allowing community members to voice their ideas and concerns, it creates a deeper connection between the participants and the outcomes of the program. This sense of involvement fosters a positive atmosphere where residents are not only recipients of aid or training but active contributors to their community's development. Moreover, the social aspect of group activities, such as workshops and discussions, often strengthens communal bonds, further encouraging participation and collective action.



The high level of enthusiasm also suggests that the community sees these activities as an important pathway to achieving greater independence and improving their quality of life. It reflects a readiness to take control of their development and actively contribute to the sustainability and success of their village.

3.2. Community Economic Empowerment: A Pathway to Self-Sufficient Villages

Community Economic Empowerment (CEE) is an essential framework for fostering self-sufficiency in villages, particularly in rural areas where residents often face economic challenges and limited access to resources. CEE aims to enhance the capabilities of community members, enabling them to take charge of their economic development. This discussion will delve into the significance of CEE, explore effective strategies for implementation, and highlight the potential impact of such initiatives on creating self-sufficient villages. At its core, Community Economic Empowerment focuses on building the skills and knowledge of community members, allowing them to effectively manage local economic activities. This empowerment approach recognizes that communities possess unique strengths, resources, and cultural identities that can be harnessed to drive development. By providing training, workshops, and participatory programs, residents can learn about sustainable practices, entrepreneurship, and resource management. For example, workshops on sustainable agriculture can equip farmers with modern techniques to increase crop yields while preserving the environment. Similarly, entrepreneurship training can help individuals develop business plans, manage finances, and market their products effectively.

One of the most significant advantages of CEE is the cultivation of local leadership and initiative. When community members are empowered, they are more likely to take ownership of their development and seek innovative solutions to their challenges. This active participation fosters a sense of responsibility and pride within the community. For instance, when residents collaboratively identify local needs and prioritize projects, they are more invested in the outcomes. This collective effort not only enhances individual confidence but also strengthens community bonds, as members come together to support one another. An essential component of CEE is the promotion of cooperative efforts among community members. Establishing cooperatives or community-based enterprises can lead to increased productivity and collective bargaining power. When residents pool their resources, they can achieve economies of scale, making it more feasible to invest in equipment, marketing, or infrastructure. For instance, a group of farmers may form a cooperative to purchase seeds and fertilizers in bulk, reducing costs for each member. This collaborative approach not only boosts economic viability but also fosters a sense of unity and shared purpose within the community.

Furthermore, CEE emphasizes the importance of identifying and utilizing local resources. By focusing on what the community already has—whether it be agricultural potential, natural resources, or traditional crafts—villages can develop sustainable economic activities that resonate with their cultural identity. This localized approach not only enhances self-sufficiency but also promotes local pride and resilience. For example, a village known for its unique handicrafts can develop a cooperative to produce and sell these items, attracting tourists and generating income while preserving cultural heritage. However, the transition to a self-sufficient village requires ongoing support and adaptation. It is essential to recognize that empowerment is not a one-time event but a continuous process. Providing access to markets, financial resources, and further training



can help sustain the momentum created by initial empowerment activities. For instance, establishing connections with local markets can ensure that products developed by the community have a viable outlet for sales. Additionally, offering microfinance or credit facilities can enable residents to invest in their businesses, enhancing their economic prospects.

Partnerships with local governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders play a vital role in amplifying the impact of CEE initiatives. These collaborations can provide the necessary infrastructure and support systems to facilitate long-term success. For example, NGOs can offer expertise in project management, while local governments can help create policies that promote local business development. Together, these entities can create an enabling environment that fosters sustainable economic growth and self-sufficiency. Moreover, successful CEE initiatives often incorporate feedback mechanisms that allow community members to voice their needs and concerns. Engaging residents in the evaluation of empowerment activities can lead to more effective and responsive programs. For instance, conducting surveys or holding community meetings can help identify gaps in knowledge or resources, enabling facilitators to tailor future training sessions accordingly. This iterative approach ensures that empowerment efforts remain relevant and impactful.

The role of education in CEE cannot be overstated. Educational programs should extend beyond economic skills to encompass a broader understanding of governance, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion. By fostering a holistic view of development, community members can make informed decisions that positively impact their economic and social environments. For example, integrating lessons on environmental conservation into economic training can encourage residents to adopt sustainable practices that protect their resources while enhancing productivity. Furthermore, the integration of technology can significantly enhance the effectiveness of CEE initiatives. Utilizing digital platforms for training, marketing, and communication can expand the reach of empowerment activities. Online courses, social media marketing, and e-commerce platforms can provide villagers with valuable tools to enhance their skills and connect with broader markets. For instance, artisans can showcase their products online, reaching customers beyond their immediate community and increasing their sales potential.

Community Economic Empowerment is a transformative approach that plays a crucial role in creating self-sufficient villages. By equipping residents with knowledge, skills, and resources, communities can take charge of their economic futures, fostering resilience and sustainability. The collaborative efforts of community members, along with continued support from external partners, are vital in ensuring that these villages can thrive independently and sustainably. As communities embrace their potential, the pathway to self-sufficiency becomes clearer, leading to improved quality of life, enhanced local economies, and a stronger sense of identity and pride among residents. Through sustained commitment to empowerment initiatives, the dream of self-sufficient villages can become a reality, paving the way for a brighter future for all community members.

4. Conclusions

The one-day community empowerment activity in Blarang Village was met with significant enthusiasm, as demonstrated by the attendance of 28 family representatives



who actively participated throughout the session. The high level of engagement, as depicted in Figure 2, illustrates the community's eagerness to learn and contribute to their village's progress. The large turnout and the interactive participation of the attendees highlight the importance of such empowerment initiatives in fostering local development and encouraging collective efforts to achieve independence. The primary objective of the activity was to provide the community with the necessary knowledge and skills to improve their economic capabilities and overall quality of life. By presenting material related to community economic empowerment, the session aimed to equip the participants with strategies they could implement in their daily lives. The content focused on practical applications, encouraging the residents to use local resources more effectively and collaboratively address challenges. This approach is crucial for creating a self-reliant and sustainable village, as it empowers individuals to take ownership of their development.

Looking forward, the success of this activity represents a positive step towards the goal of transforming Blarang Village into an independent village. The hope is that the knowledge gained during the session will translate into real actions, with community members applying the insights shared to boost local productivity, promote entrepreneurship, and strengthen their collective efforts. If the community continues to show the same level of commitment and enthusiasm, the pathway toward village independence will become more attainable. In conclusion, the one-day activity was not only informative but also a catalyst for the community's ongoing journey towards independence. The strong attendance and active participation reflect a growing momentum that can be harnessed for future development projects. With continued support and engagement, Blarang Village has the potential to reach its goal of becoming a self-sufficient, independent community.

Acknowledgments

The entire team that conducted the empowerment activities would like to express our deepest gratitude to the village staff for graciously welcoming us and providing the village hall as a venue for this event. We also extend our sincere thanks to the community members who took the time to attend and actively participate in the Community Economic Empowerment event, as part of the initiative to realize an Independent Village.

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