

## Empowering Human Resources to Accelerate MDG's Objectives Based on Participatory Rural Appraisal

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### Abstract

The study aims to analyze the implementation of poverty alleviation through the optimization of human resource development for community empowerment by using participatory rural appraisal (PRA). The analysis was performed by descriptive quantitative questionnaire distributed to respondents. Respondents in the study were members of community self-reliance institutions (MFIs) as many as 179 people. It is expected that the results obtained would be able to generate a poverty alleviation method based on the problems and potential of the region. The questionnaire in this study was used to explore the perception of the public participation in the achievement of MDG's objective in their region. The results showed that the community empowerment in poverty alleviation was done optimally; the PRA method applied has helped the community to learn more and to be empowered. Nevertheless, many poverty alleviation activities take the form of charity, so it is difficult to examine the sustainability of the program. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), MDG's has been successful, yet in quality, it still needs to be improved, especially in terms of public health, MDG's objectives number 4, 5 and 6. According to the perceptions of the respondents, there are still no legal instruments to preserve the environment.

**Keywords:** Participatory Rural Appraisal, MDG's, Empowerment, Indonesia

### Introduction

Efforts to accelerate the achievement of MDG's objectives have become a development priority, both in national and regional level; thus, a synergy in planning policies at the national level and at the provincial and city level is necessary. At the local level, MDG's targets should be integrated into the Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMD) in the form of programs, measurable indicators and targets as well as an indication of financing support.

To accelerate the achievement of MDG's, road map of the area needs to be formulated. Furthermore, roadmap needs to be translated into MDG's Action Plan in accordance with the conditions and problems in Kota Batu. With this action plan, related parties are expected to have the commitment and clarity in the planning and budgeting of the programs and activities to accelerate the achievement of MDG's.

There have been a lot of poverty alleviation programs in Kota Batu, the good programs whose funding come from APBN (PNPM Mandiri Perkotaan, PNPM Pertanian, PNPM Pariwisata), APBD Provinsi (Gerdu Taskin, Pam DKB), and APBD Kota Batu (ADD, Pilot Project). However, in reality the programs have not been able to optimize the achievement of MDG's.

The significance of this present study is to reconstruct in terms of development of a community empowerment model based on Participatory Rural Appraisal. This is done in order to realize a model that is more in line with the characteristics of the community and local culture, planned in an integrated manner with regard to the potential of local resources, ranging from the institutional structure capable of harmonizing the institutional relationship built in poverty alleviation programs—Tim Koordinasi Penanggulangan Kemiskinan Daerah (TKPKD)—involving local government (village levels), networking with stakeholders, and other concerned groups (private and state-owned business, non-governmental organizations, and universities).

From the poverty alleviation programs running over the years, both programs funded by the regional budget such as the ADD program and pilot project, from the provincial budget (Raskin, Gerdu Taskin), as well as from the national budget (PNPM Mandiri) and other programs, they still show some weaknesses. Program planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as accountability reporting have not been done based on the principles of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), are not managed in an integrated manner with other development programs, and have not been well integrated with all relevant parties or other stakeholders.

To realize the novelty and idea of this study chronologically through clear and accountable research method, then the research objectives formulated as follows. First, the study aims at exploring the important factors

suitable with the characteristics of community self-reliance agencies and cultural organization of society as a basis for the development or reformulation of the model of Human Resources Development Program at the community self-reliance agencies under the concept of Participatory Rural Appraisal. Second, the study aims at determining community empowerment programs of the various productive sectors in accordance with the characteristics of the community and by considering the potential of local wisdom towards a sustainable community development program. Third, the study aims at determining a compromise between the government strategy, community self-reliance agencies, private sector, universities, and groups concerned in poverty alleviation programs to generate independent and sustainable community empowerment. Fourth, the study aims at exploring ways to enhance institutional aspects in accordance with the demographic characteristics of the community in generating participatory human resource development program.

## 2. Critical Review

### 2.1 MDG's Framework

Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) is national and global commitments in an effort to further improve the life of the community through poverty and hunger alleviation, education, women's empowerment, health, and environmental sustainability. The 8 (eight) objectives (goals) of MDGs include: (1) to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) to achieve universal primary education; (3) to promote gender equality; (4) to reduce child mortality; (5) to improve maternal health; (6) to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; (7) to ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) to develop a global partnership for development (MDG's Report Indonesia 2010).

### 2.2 The Concept of Human Resources Empowerment & Community Empowerment

Wing (1996) uses the term personal empowerment related to business consultants and sees it as a powerful analytical tool, so these consultants can understand and direct their personal biases as well as differences in opinion, and their experience with clients in order to succeed in changing their efforts. Regardless of the definition used for "empowerment", the ultimate goal is to develop the performance and potential of individuals and organizations (Long, 1996).

The principal issues in human resources empowerment is that the term "empowerment" is often associated with handover of power or authority, yet in practice it is usually seen as a form of planned involvement of human resources by the management with the purpose of increasing the commitment and contribution of human resources to the organization. The orientation leads to individualist and not a collectivist manner, for example, empowerment based on performance of individual worker or groups of workers, and not on larger workgroups such as labor unions. This includes direct involvement in working practices. Financial participation and representative participation are not part of the agenda, by changing the shapes to other forms associated with the involvement of human resources, human resources participation, and democracy in the industrial sector. Therefore, there should be distinction between empowerment initiatives as defined above, and the initiatives that lead to empowerment.

Based on the afore-mentioned explanation, the empowerment of human resources has a crucial role in determining performance of an organization and of individual; it is necessary to improve human resources and create a culture of empowerment. Human resource capacity can be improved through training and development, which is also referred to human resource development. Creating a culture of empowerment is to create conducive environment to empowerment (Erstad, 1997). Furthermore, Erstad (1997) confirms that organizations wanting to generate a culture of empowerment must look for ways for the establishment of systems and processes that do not limit human resources. By concentrating on the behavior considered optimal for human resources and what they do well, management can adapt, develop, and change the organizational structure to produce better behavior—a situation where human resources begin to devote more attention to learn, grow, and thrive; human resources can take care of themselves; leadership is not only in the top level; there is a high level of trust between management and human resources, as well as among human resources; human resource participate in decision-making; communication is established both vertically and horizontally; and human resources can resolve conflicts with management and get an effective and efficient resolution.

In the model proposed by Denison (Mobley *et al.*, 2005), human resources empowerment of is one of the indicators in the organizational culture model. This is in accordance with the statement by Stewart (1998) that empower others is essentially a cultural change. Empowerment will not work if the entire culture of the organization has not changed fundamentally (Stewart, 1998).

Empowerment helps eliminate conditions that cause incapacitation while increasing self-efficacy, the feeling in a person that he or she is able to complete any job given (Newstrom & Davis, 1997). Thus, empowerment is a process to make people become more powerful or more capable to solve their own problems by giving them the confidence and authority to foster a sense of responsibility (Wibowo, 2007).

### 2.3 Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is a set of approaches and methods that encourage rural people to participate in enhancing and analyzing their knowledge on their own life and conditions so they can make plans and actions accordingly (Chambers, 1996). In essence, PRA is a group approach or method that allows villagers to share, enhance, and analyze their knowledge on the condition and life in the village, as well as to make concrete plans and actions (Chambers, 1996). Some basic principles that must be met in the PRA method include mutual learning and sharing of experiences, involvement of all members of the group and information, outsiders as a facilitator, triangulation, as well as optimization of results, practical orientation, and sustainability of the programs (Rochdyanto, 2000: 55).

The method is seen to have operationally elaborated techniques under the concept that community involvement is indispensable in all activities. PRA approach does aspire to change the public into researchers, planners, and implementers of development and not merely the object of development. The emphasis of the research is not on validity of the data obtained, but on practical values for the development of the program itself.

The application of PRA approaches and techniques can provide greater opportunities and focus more on involving community. Additionally, through PRA approach, suitability and efficiency of the program with the needs of the community will be achieved, as to guarantee the sustainability of the program.

Suyanto (2001: 19) argues that there is still confusion among experts on poverty. Some experts define poverty more from its economic aspects. According to Suyanto, poverty is not merely a lack of income to meet basic living needs or decent living standards—it takes more than that. The essence of poverty is related to the possibility of a poor person or family to make efforts for their own welfare.

According to Namba (2003: 1-4) and Sukartawi (1997: 1-14), various poverty alleviation programs must be done by the government, private sector, and NGOs. Various programs have been launched by the government, such as IDT that was first announced publicly, then the infrastructure development program included in the urban alleviation poverty programs by some government agencies, Takesra or Kukesra and Raskin by BKKBN, the Social Services Department has KUBE and community empowerment program, the Department of Agriculture has P4K program, and many other programs.

Empowering the community is not merely “mobilizing the people to take part” but it is to “pursue a partnership network”. The focus of community empowerment is family-oriented. The empowerment includes (1) establishing an internal capacity of the family (knowledge, skills, attitudes, and so on); (2) changing the beliefs and behaviors that hinder progress (early childhood marriage, violation of discipline, and crime); and (3) strengthening the traditional values which is conducive to development (cooperation, respect), and filtering new values.

Community empowerment is an effort to assist communities to develop their own abilities so they are able to address issues and take decisions independently. The empowerment process is done by giving the authority (power), accessibility to resources, and accommodative environment (Zimmerman, 1996: 18, Ress, 1991: 42).

Community empowerment approach embodied in the participatory development will fit and be useful to anticipate changes in the environment and in their strategic community. As a basic concept, participatory development refers to development efforts based on fulfillment of the needs of the community itself so they are able to evolve and overcome their problems independently and sustainability.

According to Kumar (2002), empowerment is a dynamic condition which reflects the ability of a social system in realizing the goals or values to which it refers (Kumar; 2002: 21). In connection with that, empowerment means efforts (programs, processes) to develop the usability of a social system in order to achieve its goal independently. As a condition, empowerment is the power generated by the interaction and articulation of culture and human initiative to work effectively and efficiently based on the norms (ethical, social, political, legal, and religious) as the reference.

### 3. Method

This study is quantitative descriptive combined with multivariate analysis to determine the role of human resource development in accelerating the achievement of MDG's through Participatory Rural Appraisals. The research variables derived from the concept of Empowerment (Empowerment of Human Resources), Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), and eight dimensions of the concept of MDG's which can be the basis for determining the competitive management schemes and sustainable empowerment.

The analysis is done using mixed methods that combines the descriptive qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis. Descriptive qualitative analysis is used to explain the relationship between variables based on opinions or ideas of the respondents or the public who have experienced empowerment program, to explore the depth of the program running and to explore expectations of the society towards poverty alleviation programs. The other analysis is done using factor analysis to produce crystallization of dominant dimensions capable of forming variables.

Population in this study is the Community Self-Reliance Agencies in 24 villages targeted as receivers of poverty alleviation and intervention program. The total number of respondents participated in this study are 179 from all villages in Kota Batu. Sampling technique chosen is purposive sampling and documentation as needed by the analysis techniques.

### 4. Result

Poverty has become a priority for all SKPDs in Kota Batu. This is evidenced by the activities and programs as well as the realization of poverty alleviation efforts.

Table 1. Poverty Alleviation Achievement until 2013

No.	Aspects	2010	2011	2012	2013
1.	The number of the poor	9.700	9.100	8.700	9.300
2.	Headcount poverty rate (P0)	5.11	4.74	4.45	4.75
3.	Poverty line	-	-	306.780	336.844
4.	Poverty gap index (P1)	0.71	0.52	0.64	0.48
5.	Poverty severity index (P2)	0.18	0.1	0.13	0.07

Source: BPS- Batu City, 2014

Table 1 shows the data on the achievements of poverty alleviation programs in Kota Batu. In 2010, poverty rate reached 5.11% and decreased in 2011 to 4.74%. In 2012, the rate fell to 4.45%. In 2013, the rate increased 0.30% to 4.75%, but it symbolizes an achievement for Kota Batu, especially compared with the achievements of the country and of East Java Province.

The poverty rate in Kota Batu has substantially decreased. This can be seen from the drop in the severity index and gap index. The poverty gap index is a measure of the intensity of poverty. It is defined as the average poverty gap in the population as a proportion of the poverty line. In 2012, it was 0.64 and decreased by 0.48% in 2013. This shows that the spending of the poor in Kota Batu is not too far from the poverty line; it means that poverty in Batu is more due to the increase of the poverty line, as many as 306,780 in 2012 to 336.844 in 2013. It can be concluded that the poor in Kota Batu is dominated by almost poor or potentially poor condition.

The substantially reduced poverty in Kota Batu is both due to the impact of the priorities of development programs and the implications of the special treatment of the Government's commitment to improve the welfare of the community through community empowerment in both rural and urban areas.

Various priority policies implemented to address the problem of poverty include the Program for Community Empowerment in Rural Areas, Rural Economic Development Programs, and Improvement of Public Participation in Developing Villages. These programs aim to foster self-reliance through load reduction, improvement on the quality of life of small communities, meeting the needs of rural community, business development, expansion of employment and income generation, and community-based empowerment on social capital and local culture, and prevention of social problems.

The descriptive statistical analysis and the mean indicators of each variable in this study are as follows:

Table 2. Variable and Mean Indicator

Variable	Indicator	Number of Items	Mean Indicator
Human resource empowerment	Level of participation	2 item	4.24
	Level of initiatives	2 item	4.09
	Level of commitment	2 item	4.09
	Level of responsibility	2 item	4.285
	Mean Variable of HR Empowerment		4.176
Participatory Rural Appraisal	Attitudes	4 item	4.175
	Involvement	4 item	4.137
	Facility	3 item	3.977
	Results optimization	3 item	3.97
	Program sustainability	3 item	4.153
		Mean Variable PRA	
MDG's Achievement	Reduced extreme poverty and hunger	3 item	3.88
	Universal primary education	3 item	3.91
	Gender equality	3 item	3.57
	Reduced child mortality	4 item	3.92
	Improved maternal health	3 item	3.68
	Combat communicable diseases	3 item	3.38
	Environmental sustainability	3 item	3.85
		Mean Variable of MDG's Achievement	

For the variable of HR Empowerment, the indicator with the highest value is the level of responsibility with a mean value of 4.829, the indicator with second highest is the level of participation with a mean value of 4.24, the third and the fourth in rank are the level of participation and initiative with a mean value of 4.09. From this analysis, it can be concluded that the empowerment of human resources especially in community self-reliance agencies in Kota Batu has been running well, shown from the mean value of 4.176. The empowerment is optimal; this is indicated by the mean value of all the indicators having an average value over four (4). However, optimization of initiative and commitment of the members of community self-reliance agencies to formulate and implement poverty alleviation programs need to be done by building community loyalty to work together and to understand the problem of poverty, for example in the program of Village Fund Allocation (ADD) and other poverty alleviation programs.

The next variable is Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). This variable has an average value of 4.08. This value illustrates that poverty alleviation activities undertaken by the community in general have been based on PRA. This can be seen from the mean value of each indicator in PRA variable. The first indicator has a mean value of 4.175, the highest among other indicators. In general, this indicator elaborates the attitudes and behavior of community self-reliance agencies in poverty alleviation activities in the region, in which they should serve as a facilitator for the region. This mean value represents the attitudes and behavior of community self-reliance agencies in the implementation of poverty alleviation programs, in which their attitudes are in conformity with the provisions of the PRA model but still need to be optimized in the application of the model.

Respondents' perceptions on the achievement of MDG's in Kota Batu are still low, although statistics show that the achievement of MDG's in Kota Batu is considered the highest in East Java. The mean value on the achievements of MDG's is 3.74, the lowest among other variables. This indicates that public in Kota Batu perceives that the achievement of MDG's have not been as expected. The lowest respondents' perception

towards the achievement of MDG's is especially on communicable disease control indicator of 3.38. This value indicates that control over communicable disease has not been fully enjoyed by the public, so they expect an improvement in health services in Kota Batu.

## 5. Discussion

The first variable on empowerment shows that public involvement in poverty alleviation activities still needs to be optimized, although participation has already existed. It can be seen from the perception of the public, seeing that the implemented program has been able to empower the community, especially in terms of planning and implementing poverty alleviation in the region. This will increase public awareness of the environment.

The second variable on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) shows that this approach has been applied to nearly all poverty alleviation activities undertaken by community self-reliance agencies in Kota Batu, although poverty alleviation activities undertaken by community self-reliance agencies are merely charity and not purely to empower communities, and still rely on funding from both local and central government. Therefore, we need best practice on the application of PRA method to empower communities in poverty alleviation. The aim is to give an example on how to utilize the optimal potential of the community itself.

The achievement of the MDG's, based on the perception of respondents, is still not optimal, especially in the prevention of communicable diseases. The empirical data of MDG's first goal (reducing poverty and hunger) confirm that the goal has been reached; even up to 2013, the poverty rate in Batu only reached 4.5%. However, the number of people suffering from HIV / AIDS, based on data from the Commission on HIV / AIDS, has increased. Therefore, there is a paradox between empirical achievements of MDG's (BPS data) with reality.

Based on these conditions, the future studies are expected to include more respondents both the community and the implementer of the programs (government and other concerned groups). In this case, community self-reliance agencies receive, manage, and supervise the implementation of poverty alleviation activities funded by the local, provincial, and central government. This is done to get information and results of the empirical analysis on poverty and accelerate the achievement of MDG's.

## 6. Conclusions And Recommendations

### 6.1 Conclusion

Involvement of community self-reliance agencies in poverty alleviation activities still need to be optimized, especially in terms of fundraising for the implementation of the program. Further, the programs do not depend on the local or central government funding, but more as the responsibility of the community.

Implementation of poverty alleviation programs has been done using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), yet improvement is needed (Triatanto *et al.*, 2014). This is done in almost all poverty alleviation activities primarily conducted by the National Program for Community Empowerment (PNPM Mandiri). Poverty alleviation activities undertaken by SKPD are charity in nature and have not comprehensively empowered communities. Therefore, we need the best practice on the application of PRA method to empower communities in poverty alleviation.

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There is a paradox between empirical achievements of MDG's with the achievements of poverty and hunger alleviation. That is, poverty and hunger has declined, but HIV / AIDS has increased. In addition, maternal health shows no improvement, as many respondents could not decide how to perceive the achievement of the fifth goal of MDG's and most of them chose three (3).

### 6.2 Recommendations

On the implementation of community empowerment, it is expected that community self-reliance agencies to be creative. All the villages have had the document on medium-term poverty reduction programs (PJM Pronangkis). The document must become the reference for the government in the implementation of poverty alleviation. Besides, community self-reliance agencies as the representative of the communities need to be more creative to promote the programs to concerned groups to work together in accelerating the achievement of MDG's.

The implementation of poverty alleviation is more effective by using the PRA method. The help of outsiders as suggested in the PRA approach can be replaced by community self-reliance agencies. This is consistent with the development of the PRA method (Chambers, 1996).

Updating the data needs to be done sustainability to obtain more accurate data, as to avoid conflicts and empowerment programs are implemented to the right targets.

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