

## EMPOWERMENT OF UMKM ACTIVITIES THROUGH CSR PROGRAM OF PT. TIRTA INVESTAMA PLANT SUBANG

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### Abstract

This study aims to describe the implementation of a program related to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the community economic empowerment program (Ecodev) in an effort to achieve the independence of business actors by PT. Tirta Investama (Aqua) and West Java Human Initiative as program implementing partners in Subang Regency. The concept used in this study uses the Triple Bottom Line (3P) concept by John Elkington (1998), that corporate social responsibility (CSR) pays attention to improving the quality of the company (profit); provide benefits to the surrounding community (people); maintain the environmental sustainability of the operating area (planet). This study focuses on the implementation of corporate social responsibility in an effort to empower the community which was stated by Sumodiningrat (1999) that, "community empowerment is an effort to make the community independent through realizing the potential of their own abilities. In line with this, Bernadib stated that "Independence includes the behavior of being able to take the initiative, being able to solve problems, having self-confidence, being able to do things without depending on others". This study uses a qualitative approach using primary data analysis from journals and secondary data obtained based on information from field implementers. Data collection techniques used are document studies and literature review. Analysis of the validity of the data using the stages of data triangulation, thick and rich description, and prolonged time. Data analysis techniques using coding and categorization. The results of the study revealed that the community economic empowerment program (Ecodev) of PT. Tirta Investama Plant Subang results in the independence of business actors marked by the emergence of innovations Packaging and branding innovations are carried out by the UMKM of the aided cooperatives. Through increased originality and innovation, the company's products will have a high resale value, allowing them to compete on the market via social media platforms such as shopee, facebook advertisements, and business whatsapp, as well as offline marketing channels such as retail souvenir stores in developing businesses which are facilitated by the West Java Human Initiative as a facilitator.

**Keywords:** *UMKM, Community Empowerment, Corporate Social Responsibility, Imdependence.*

## 1. Introduction

The majority of people utilize financial loan services such as Bank Emok to obtain money in a quick and convenient manner due to their uncertain income and increasing and pressing financial needs. Research conducted by (Budiman et al., 2021) People still rely on moneylenders from bank emok since they have urgent requirements and may obtain loans cheaply and swiftly without collateral and at reasonable interest rates, making bank emok an option for housewives.

Bank Emok is a Sundanese word that refers to the manner a woman sits on her knees with her legs crossed behind her back. This loan distribution is known as Bank Emok because loan transactions are conducted on a lesehan (sitting on a mat or floor). The primary function of emok banks is to supply business organizations with loans. (Budiman et al., 2021). In an effort to implement PT's corporate social responsibility program in response to the prevalence of situations involving housewives entangled in emok bank loans in the company's vicinity. Tirta Investama joined with the West Java Human Initiative as a third-party implementing partner for the community economic empowerment program (Ecodev) in an effort to better the community surrounding the enterprise.

Through a variety of means, including the execution of a profit-seeking campaign for cooperative membership, where cooperatives can not only guarantee and facilitate members' primary and secondary demands, it is possible to increase the number of cooperative members. Cooperatives, however, can serve as business institutions in the form of savings and lending operations for members in the form of cooperative kiosks where processed products of UMKM promoted by cooperatives can be sold. In an effort to strengthen the economy of the neighborhood surrounding the company and to break free from the shackles of mobile banks, West Java's human initiative not only assists with marketing, but also capacitates with regard to product packaging and provides assistance to obtain the legality of UMKM products.

The COVID-19 pandemic epidemic has an effect on the economic life of the society, particularly for business actors. Due to the pandemic producing a decline in the number of UMKM actors' incomes, the space for UMKM actors is limited. Unmet capital needs and the challenge of obtaining optimal income to preserve the business's viability ultimately result in the demise and underdevelopment of UMKM actors.

674 respondents with their primary source of income participated in a survey performed by the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) on the performance of UMKMs affected by the Covid-19 epidemic in 2020 As a business actor, it demonstrates that during the pandemic, 94.69% of businesses experienced a decline in sales with a business scale of greater than 75% decline in sales for ultra-micro businesses, 43.3% for micro businesses, 40% for small businesses, and 45.83% for medium businesses (<http://lipi.go.id/>, accessed on 04 Juli 2022, 20:51).

In an effort to build Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (UMKM), the corporation provides finance assistance administered by cooperatives to prevent the decline of MSME actors' operations. Cooperatives can have a direct or indirect effect on the community through partnering with cooperatives related to the capital of Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Businesses (UMKM).

PT. Tirta Investama carries out its corporate social responsibility and environmental projects in a variety of ways, one of which is by strengthening the local economy. Community Empowerment is defined by Subejo and Supriyanto (2004) as "a deliberate effort to facilitate local communities in planning, deciding, and managing their local resources through *collective action* and *networking* so that they have the capacity and independence economically, ecologically, and socially."(Nurwulan L. Riany, Kurniasih Nina, 2014)

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives are structured by PT. Tirta Investama collaborates with nongovernmental groups or *Non-Governmental Organizations* (NGO), specifically the West Java Human Initiative. Human Initiative of West Java is one of the humanitarian groups that can give answers to realize concerns in three areas of work: *initiative for children, initiative for empowerment, and initiative for disasters.*

PT. Tirta Investama has implemented a number of corporate social responsibility programs, one of which is a community empowerment initiative that focuses on strengthening and empowering Community Economics (Ecodev). Community economic empowerment is the process of transforming a situation from helplessness to empowerment, beginning with a lack of control and the inability to improve their life (Dwi Angreni & Asmorowati, 2021).

PT. West Java Human Initiative implements Tirta Investama Investama Plant Subang to empower communities around industrial areas. In 2021, the Community Economic Empowerment (Ecodev) program will deploy CSR by PT. The initiative aims to strengthen local economic institutions to create economic independence and social capital. The West Java Human Initiative implements Tirta Investama Plant Subang by strengthening local economic institutions to create economic independence and social capital, by empowering communities around industrial areas to improve community welfare, and by empowering women as part of micro distribution carried out with the active participation of all parties and social strata in an effort to build the local economy.

Ristianasari et al. (2013) conducted research titled "The Effect of the Conservation Village Model Empowerment Program on Community Self-reliance". The purpose of empowerment is to improve community autonomy, which leads to increased community awareness, knowledge, and welfare initiatives. Communities residing in close proximity to conservation areas are gaining ecological independence.

The research focuses on the successful implementation of CSR programs in an effort to empower the community's economy (ecodev) by developing cooperative units and operations and UMKM. With the title Empowering MSME Actors through the CSR Program, this CSR program is anticipated to empower business actors by PT. Tirta Investama Plant Subang.

## **2. Method**

This study employs qualitative research methods. The strategy utilized in this study is a literature review method. This study utilized primary data sources from scholarly journals, (*textbooks*), and official websites associated with the ecodev program as its data sources. While the secondary data sources for this study consisted of data received indirectly through other people or documents, the primary data sources were collected

directly from individuals. Information and official documents from a third party operating the initiative on the ground, notably the Head of the West Java Human Initiative Program, served as secondary data sources for this study. In order to characterize the problem to be examined, the type of data is described based on the identification of the problem and the research concept that will be employed.

Data collection procedures through documentation studies and literature studies are conducted by gathering data from diverse sources such as documents, journals, articles, books, *websites*, and other sources in line with the needs that are directly related to the object of study. This study employs data triangulation techniques, lengthy and complex descriptions, (*thick and rich description, prolong time*). In order to obtain the data's legitimacy. Coding and categorization are employed for data analysis in this study.

### **3. Result and Discussion.**

This section will explain and describe the findings of literature-based study on the implementation of CSR to strengthen the local economy (Ecodev) by PT. Tirta Investama (AQUA) Plant Subang. This investigation led to a debate of: Implementation of the Community Economic Empowerment Program (Ecodev) results in the independence of UMKM actors by PT. Tirta investama; Obstacles to the UMKM Community Economic Empowerment Program and Related Efforts (Ecodev) Tirta Investama; and the Applied and Theoretical Implications of Empowerment in Social Welfare Science.

#### **Community Empowerment through Ecodev Program Implementation by PT. Tirta Investama (AQUA) Plant Subang.**

The economic empowerment program carried out by PT. Tirta Investama Subang in conjunction with the West Java Human Initiative Community economic empowerment program consists of five stages: the approach stage, the planning stage (planning), the organizing stage (organizing), the implementation stage, and the monitoring and evaluation stage (monev), which will be described below..

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

The economic empowerment program (ecodev) is implemented by involving the community's active participation in the economic development of the community through the community's local potential. The strategy chosen by PT. Tirta Investama (AQUA) Plant Subang in its ecodev program is comprised of multiple facets, including both the object aspect approach in the form of productive economic endeavors and the process aspect approach; Aspects of needs in the form of preconditions that can facilitate the program's implementation; and aspects of players in the form of parties involved in the ecodev program. The strategy is implemented by targeting aspects of community needs in line with the characteristics of the target group in order to actively engage (stakeholders) in the program process in order to achieve program success in accordance with program requirements and accomplishments.

##### **b. Stage Planning**

The planning stages conducted by the West Java Human Initiative through the ecodev program of PT. Tirta Investama employ two assessment techniques: social mapping and *focus group discussion* (FGD). The process of acquiring pertinent information regarding

problem mapping, prospective mapping, needs mapping, and program recommendations for satisfying community needs through the assessment procedure. During this phase, PT. Tirta Investama and the West Java Human Initiative include individuals from all walks of life in making decisions and organizing programs that are offered to the community based on their needs and on target. The purpose of the evaluation is to help the organization and program implementer determine the best approach to the surrounding community. Human Initiative conducts Social Mapping every five years and updates the data annually.

#### **c. Stage Organizing**

The West Java Human Initiative, as the entity responsible for implementing the economic empowerment initiative on the ground, assembled a core team of 3 (three) individuals, consisting of 1 (one) Project Manager and 2 (two) field assistants/facilitators. The organizational stage is the stage of community development that prioritizes democratic deliberation-based community development. The organizing phase is conducted in order to meet future conditions and obstacles pertaining to the attainment of optimal community empowerment.

Increasing community engagement is part of community empowerment, according to Adisasmita (2006, 34) in (Fadil, 2013) Society is both an object and subject of the program's development. In accordance with the organizing stages carried out by the West Java *Human Initiative*, namely coordinating and holding discussions with stakeholders about program plans related to community needs and issues that will be empowered in the community, the West Java Human Initiative will empower community members.

#### **d. Stage Implementation**

The West Java Human Initiative implemented CSR at PT. Tirta Investama Subang in three stages in accordance with the theory of Yusuf Wibisono (2007:121-124), who said that the implementation stages included the socializing stage, the program implementation stage, and the internalization stage. In the socialization phase, Aqua Group, the parent company of PT. Tirta Investama, discusses the significance of corporate social responsibility as it relates to this economic empowerment program.

The second stage consists of the execution of programs and activities that have been prepared and agreed upon with the community in line with the community's needs. These activities will be carried out by specialists in the form of workshops, mentorship, and training.

Community economic empowerment program (Ecodev) PT. Tirta Investama Plant Subang, implemented by the West Java Human Initiative, aims to contribute to the improvement of the economic well-being of the people of Subang, and one of its specific goals is to establish economic independence for the community through mentoring, training, and workshops which will be described as follows:

##### **1. Mentoring**

Mentoring is one of the efforts made to facilitate problem-solving in order to establish a collaborative decision-making process and foster independence. The assistant is responsible for facilitating the community's collaborative problem-solving from the stage of problem identification, through the search for alternative problem-solving (solutions), and up to the stage of implementation or implementation. Companions can serve as facilitators OR teachers (Suharto, 2005:200).

In accordance with this description, the West Java Human Initiative's efforts to empower the community's economy through assistance efforts in the focus areas of Unit Development and Cooperative Operations and UMKM Development are carried out through four types of assistance, including unit development, cooperative operations, and UMKM development:

- 1) Optimizing the cooperative governance and system. Assistance is provided to cooperative management in order to ensure the continuity of the cooperative system and good administration in terms of finance for cooperative members;
- 2) Financial-based application software developed by General Achmad Yani University Lecturers and Students as an act of dedication in teaching financial applications in distributing the Remaining Operating Results (SHU) to cooperative management;
- 3) To capacitate cooperative human resources in line with the Duties, Principles, and Functions (Tupoksi) in accordance with the direction and desires of both the Cooperative Service and PT. Tirta Investama in performing its functions as planned and maximizing members in terms of institutions;
- 4) Cooperatives can become business institutions, which means that in addition to carrying out savings and loan activities for cooperative members, cooperatives can carry out other business sectors in the form of "Cooperative Stalls" that serve as a place to sell food products of assisted MSMEs as well as products needed by cooperative members to fulfill their daily needs, both primary and secondary needs of cooperative members.

## 2. Training

As part of the West Java Human Initiative's community economic empowerment efforts, training is one of the activities conducted. Community training is based on satisfying needs and resolving community problems. Basically, training must be pulled from the society itself. Training must adhere to the concepts of participation, reflection, and feedback during its execution. In an effort to empower the community, the following training activities are conducted: enhancing cooperative financial management and cooperative business strategies for administrators; UMKM product brand and packaging training; online marketing strategy training; and partner networking.

## 3. Workshop

Workshop is a sort of activity in which numerous specialists in a given field assemble with a group of people from the same background or profession and engage in interaction activities while discussing a particular issue. (<https://accurate.id/> retrieved on June 8, 2022 at 15.10). The West Java Human Initiative's community empowerment workshops included the following efforts: (1) More optimization from the marketing side to ensure that members directly benefit from cooperatives; (2) campaigning for the benefits of cooperatives; (3) digitalization of cooperatives, the use of social media aspects for cooperative campaigns, and cooperative efforts in dealing with the Covid 19 Pandemic period of cooperative campaigns; (4) Targeting UMKMs based on food processing innovation, one of which is superior product innovation for palm sugar receiving 1 (one) position for food processing innovation, while for cooperatives it is ranked 1 as RAT Cooperative Subang Regency.

**e. Monitoring dan Evaluation (Monev)**

The West Java Human Initiative party conducts the evaluation phase, which involves the monitoring and evaluation processes through reporting and auditing. Monitoring seeks to identify imbalances or misalignments between planning and actions that have been prepared in order to generate requirements that will be modified for the program to be executed. Field evaluations are conducted periodically to determine whether components of the program's effectiveness were realized in the field.

The monitoring, evaluation, and audit program reporting procedures are implemented in accordance with the agreement between the corporation and the West Java Human Initiative regarding the program committee:

- a. Monitoring and evaluation: in performing supervision and assessment of the program, presented in writing and in the form of a presentation at a meeting between PT. Tirta Investama (AQUA) Subang Plant and West Java Human Initiative.
- b. The report is given with the phases and timeline of the entire program, detailing the implementation of social interventions on the ground.
- c. Audits are conducted routinely at all activities with a method for monitoring and control. Meanwhile, the cooperative institutional audit is conducted once per year in the two cooperatives receiving assistance.

**Impact of Community Empowerment Implementation on the Independence of UMKM Actors via the Ecodev Program of PT. Tirta Investama (AQUA) Plant Subang.**

Community empowerment efforts carried out by PT. Tirta Investama in the economic field, one of which focuses on business development and management of cooperative services. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (UMKM) UMKM provides assistance, training, and workshops so as to achieve the common goal of improving economic conditions.

The purpose of community empowerment is to strengthen the community's capacity to attain independence and escape from powerlessness and backwardness. The execution of sustainable empowerment programs is conducted using a comprehensive mentoring approach in which the empowerment program is implemented thoroughly by focusing not only economic but also social and cultural factors.

Clearly, a program's implementation has an effect on the community. Impacts may or may not occur as anticipated. In this instance, the community economic empowerment program of PT. Tirta Investama conducted by the West Java Human Initiative, with an emphasis on business development and management of cooperative services, can facilitate business actors' access to finance for business development. In addition, the West Java Human Initiative's mentoring activities for Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (UMKM) can move the economy by enhancing the business productivity of business actors and the income of the populace.

The theory that will be used as an analytical tool in this discussion is Bernadib's theory of independence, as stated in , based on the description provided above "Independence entails the behaviors of being able to take the initiative, being able to

overcome obstacles, possessing self-confidence, and being able to act independently of the circumstances. others to oneself".

Bernadib's definition of independence in (Nurhayati, 2018) indicates that a person is independent if he or she has the initiative to create changes, the ability to solve difficulties, self-confidence, and is not accountable for others. Impact of the implementation of the community economic empowerment program on the independence of MSME actors by PT. Tirta Investama Plant Subang in the focus of business development and governance of cooperative services and MSME assistance by the West Java Human Initiative, including the impact on Independence with the following sub-themes: (1) Able to Initiate, (2) Able to Solve Problems, (3) Confidence, and (4) Not Dependent on Others:

### **Capable of Starting**

The role of communication between the community and the facilitator in empowering activities to improve the quality and welfare of their lives necessitates initiative on the part of the community as beneficiaries. In any empowerment activity, the community can judge the success of the empowerment program based on the program's efficiency and community engagement in its implementation.

If there is a growing desire among individuals and organizations to transcend helplessness in resolving problems, empowerment initiatives might be initiated. MSME actors felt the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a drop or decrease in income. Clearly, this issue makes it difficult for UMKM actors to overcome this issue.

PT. Tirta Investama Plant Subang by the West Java Human Initiative focuses on unit development and cooperative operations, and the growth of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (UMKM) is carried out through training activities, mentorship, and workshops. The training centered on the development of Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (UMKM) was conducted in the form of *workshops* for UMKM and training on UMKM product brands and packaging for members of UMKM -fostered cooperatives.

Through socialization, brand training and product packaging activities are carried out. The facilitator provides instructions on how to establish a brand and a product logo to increase the product's appeal and selling potential. With the innovation in packaging and branding carried out by the cooperative's supported UMKM, the items can compete on the market via social media platforms and offline marketing channels such as retail souvenir shops.

The West Java Human Initiative facilitates online marketing training and offline marketing partner networks as part of its empowerment initiatives. Research conducted by (Annaafi, 2021), the Journal of Community Empowerment. Through UMKM Training noted the significance of branding as an effort to boost the economy during the Covid-19 pandemic:

Product marketing is one of the most essential aspects of running a business (Putong, 2010). The pandemic period is a time when new habits must be adopted in order to improve the economy of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (UMKM) actors by increasing their creativity and invention so that their products have a high selling price and their marketing may be increased.



In accordance with this statement, the West Java *Human Initiative's* activities to achieve economic improvement for MSME actors during the Covid-19 pandemic were conducted through product sales using technology in the form of social media marketing, the *shopee* marketplace, *WhatsApp Business*, and *Facebook Ads*, as well as product videos. To improve the product outcomes of business actors.

On the basis of community directives and initiatives, economic empowerment activities are carried out in an effort to solve problems relating to declining income through brand and packaging training activities, as well as training on online and offline network marketing expansion.

Prior to the training on packaging, branding, online marketing, and offline partner networks, business actors in the marketing of their products relied solely on setting up modest stalls throughout the village. This is due to the fact that business players have not yet innovated their products in terms of packaging and flavor, making them less desirable for mass marketing.

Prior packaging consisted of common plastic that was manually sealed with wax and lacked a brand. New packaging uses ziplock plastic or thick plastic that is sealed air-proof. It also comes with a brand that is affixed to the front of the plastic.

Obviously, if packaging modifications are made, the product will be more durable and marketable. Therefore, in terms of marketing, business players generate revenue by leveraging mass media such as *shopee and whatsapp business* and actively promoting both via *facebook advertisements*. This is the effect of the program's mentoring, training, and seminars on the community. Listed below are some UMKM goods supported by the community economic development program (Ecodev) of PT. Tirta Investama Plant Subang by Human Initiative West Java.



**Kripik Kaca Balado**



**Bakpia Nanas**



**Gula Aren**

Source: Last Report Last Human Initiative Jabar 2021

### **Capable of Solving Issues**

When community participation in the implementation of development is a determinant of a program's success, efforts to empower the community to solve problems are extremely important. Participation is a form of active and voluntary involvement and

participation, both for internal (intrinsic) and external (extrinsic) reasons, in the entire process of activities, including decision making in planning, implementation, control (monitoring, evaluation, supervision), and use of the results of the activities achieved (Mardikanto, 2019: 82). This is consistent with the assertion (Mardikanto, 2019: 61-62) that "community empowerment is a participative process that allows people the confidence and chances to assess their primary development difficulties and propose activities to address these issues." Efforts to establish a community through community empowerment programs are determined by the community, with other institutions serving solely as facilitators and supporters.

Community economic empowerment program implemented by the West Java Human Initiative through training, mentorship, and workshop activities. Among the issues faced by the community are a 60-70 percent drop in turnover (revenue) of business actors as a result of the pandemic. Some of these issues motivate people to join cooperative. The West Java Human Initiative's training activities and workshops aid the community in earning or regaining revenue through packaging innovation and marketing of UMKM products. The primary purpose of the community's participation in this program is to solve the challenges that have been assisted by PT. Tirta Investama Plant Subang.

### **Self-Confident**

Community empowerment is an effort to strengthen the community's capability and confidence to play an active part in its development. In this instance, the facilitator is the change agent's executor, influencing the decision-making process of the beneficiaries. The facilitator might inspire or persuade the community to engage in income-generating activities.

The West Java Human *Initiative* provides training and mentoring for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (UMKM), training and mentoring for cooperative management, cooperative management workshops, and financial application software to boost public confidence in overcoming their difficulties. The activities conducted can assist the community in enhancing their business development skills.

Training programs and seminars are the steady dissemination of knowledge and skills to the community. Program implementation begins with socialization, followed by training and assistance for hygienic and high-quality UMKM products. The program is implemented through *the* packaging, labeling (branding), promotion, and marketing of processed products via social media networks and various social media platforms.

Various advancements in packaging, labeling, and marketing make individuals more enthusiastic about implementing more innovations, including opaque processed products. Opak is a traditional Sundanese snack composed of rice flour or sticky rice flour, sugar, grated coconut, and other ingredients. (<https://id.wikipedia.org/>; accessed June 5, 2022, at 19:01).

Opak is really a simple preparation; not everyone can appreciate opaque. However, with the addition of a basic ingredient that is increasingly popular, namely brown sugar (palm sugar), by one of the UMKM assisted in Subang, opaque can be a food that everyone would be interested in trying. Opak brown sugar is one example of product innovation by UMKM actors in Subang cooperatives receiving assistance.

This innovation enhances business actors' trust in selling opaques by including innovations in flavor, packaging, labeling, and marketing. According to this description, one of the outcomes of the community empowerment program is an increase in self-confidence through innovative food processing. The image below depicts UMKM items supported by Opak Brown Sugar.



**Opak Brown Sugar**

**Source: Last Report Human Initiative Jabar 2021**

#### **Do not depend on others**

Empowerment as an endeavor to establish community independence does not imply that a community does not require assistance or support from other parties, but rather that the community can choose and avoid parties that will make them dependent. As social organisms, people cannot exist apart from one another. The development of human interactions with other humans begins at birth and continues throughout life.

The majority of members of cooperatives and helped small and medium-sized businesses are women over the age of 40. The training was conducted in an effort to help business actors who had experienced a 60-70 percent drop in revenue overcome their difficulties. Intensive marketing efforts are conducted via social media in order to expand the market for the products of the aided UMKM.

The West Java *Human Initiative* is continuing its empowerment activities in order to achieve communal independence. A further attempt is made by engaging the offspring of business actors to provide training and workshops on social media product marketing. This enables business players to sell their products through various social media platforms, with the help of their children who conduct social media promotions and transactions.

#### **Obstacles and Efforts to Community Empowerment Implementation Through Ecodev, PT. Tirta Investama (AQUA) Plant Subang was constructed.**

Community empowerment is the process of building or generating the community's strengths and potentials in an effort to enhance community conditions through a participatory method or by involving the community's active participation throughout the

phases of community development. The implementation of empowerment efforts to increase the economic independence of a community through the creation of cooperative units and operations and the growth of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (UMKM) is not always successful. Even though the implementation of economic empowerment has many positive effects on the community, there may still be internal and external hurdles and difficulties in carrying out its implementation. In accordance with (Gunawan et al., 2020) research findings, the journal Environmental Friendly Community Empowerment and Nano Holistic Social Entrepreneurship in the Cleanliness, Beauty and Comfort (K3L) Women's Group, UNPAD Jatiningor Campus, reported:

One of the decisive variables and barriers in community empowerment programs is human resources.

Providing help and training directly on the field to facilitators is hampered by obstacles. It is corroborated by research results (Reskiaddin et al., 2020) in the journal "Challenges and Barriers to Community Empowerment in Control of Non-Communicable Diseases in Semi-City Areas" indicating this:

In carrying out community empowerment, the facilitator faces hurdles. In community empowerment efforts, lack of awareness, education, experience, and community self-concept are common obstacles.

Based on the aforementioned research findings, this is consistent with the obstacles and challenges encountered in the implementation of economic empowerment of PT. Tirta Investama Plant Subang by the West Java *Human Initiative*, wherein the facilitators encountered a number of obstacles and challenges that will be described below:

### **Social Barriers to Enforcement of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM)**

During the COVID-19 epidemic, the introduction of Community Activity Restrictions led to the emergence of the existing social impediments, particularly mentorship and implementation roadblocks (PPKM). The first two people exposed to the Covid-19 virus in the country had direct contact with one of the Japanese citizens who tested positive after leaving Indonesia.

The empowerment program is a program that must be implemented regularly and *sustainably*, hence requiring a considerable amount of time. With the extension of the PPKM policy by the government, the West Java Human Initiative, as one of the Facilitators tasked with providing training and assistance to UMKM and Cooperatives in Subang, faces barriers and problems.

Obstacles and difficulties for the Human Initiative as a community aid facilitator. In the midst of a pandemic, E-learning is utilized to aid in the creation of product innovations that will allow them to compete in terms of marketing. In the midst of the pandemic, West Java's *Human Initiative* is aggressively digitizing the marketing of Business, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (UMKM) products via mass media, including the *shopee marketplace*, *WhatsApp Business*, and *Facebook Ads*, as well as product videos, in order to increase the results of business actors' products.

### **Technical Barriers to Licensing System Update**

Empowering micro and small business actors is essential for promoting the economic prosperity of a region. Permits in the form of text are issued to micro and small business players to facilitate access to services (<https://jdih.kkp.go.id/>, accessed 30 April 2018). Micro and Small Business Permit is abbreviated as IUMK in Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 98 of 2014 Concerning Licensing for Micro and Small Businesses. Micro and Small Business Permit (IUMK) is a license signifying legality for a person or business actor/certain activity. microbusiness on a single page". IUMK strives to give legal clarity and enable micro and small business operators in the development of their enterprises. In addition, the IUMK intends to give protection and predictability to facilitate corporate development support. The government adopted a new regulation regulating the OSS system to simplify and streamline the administration of complex and time-consuming permit procedures.

Electronically Integrated Business Licensing or Online Single Submission (OSS) is a business license provided to business actors via an integrated electronic system. OOS is used to manage business licenses for the following types of business actors form of business entity or individual; Micro, Small, Medium, and Large Enterprises.

July 2018 The Online Single Submission (OSS) program is meant to provide convenience for business actors, but its implementation is viewed as having numerous flaws that can prevent business actors from gaining business legitimacy. The Monitoring Committee for the Implementation of Regional Autonomy (KPPOD) conducted an evaluation of the implementation of the OSS platform and identified the following three issues with the implementation of OSS:

Regulatory aspects, system aspects, and management aspects are the three most significant obstacles to OSS deployment. The majority of regions continue to struggle with OSS integration, the license database is still unclear, the *E-Payment* option is unavailable, not all regions have a Detailed Spatial Plan (RDTR), and there are additional procedures in the application that are believed to hinder the process.

In line with this, the West Java *Human Initiative* encountered challenges as part of its support in getting permits and legalities for business actors in PT. Tirta Investama Subang's economic empowerment program. Efforts to upgrade the system are hindered by extra procedures and a complete change in the licensing method, which considerably complicates the management of permits.

The West Java Human Initiative as a partner in carrying out licensing for the legality of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (UMKM) takes a relatively long time to obtain (NIB and IUMKM) because the system is still in the trial and error phase. Legality of UMKM in acquiring a Business Identification Number (NIB) is a business identity used by business actors to seek business permits on the Online Single Submission (OSS) website. Business actors are required to register with the OSS system by entering the appropriate information.

### **Technical Barriers to Program Distribution**

In an age of accelerating modernization, the role of digitization can bring about substantial changes. Recognizing the rapid pace of technology advancement, the West Java Human Initiative is an endeavor to channel community empowerment programs through the use of digitalization. However, the execution of community empowerment cannot be divorced from barriers, one of which relates to the beneficiaries' lack of technological literacy as empowered parties.

Due to the huge number of beneficiaries who were above the age of 40 and did not have smart phones, the community empowerment program's product marketing training activities via social media networks met difficulties. This causes the marketing training process for UMKM processed items to encounter hurdles, resulting in suboptimal program outcomes.

### **Assistance Efforts through Whatsapp Groups**

The empowerment program is a program that must be implemented regularly and sustainably, hence requiring a considerable amount of time. Due to the introduction of Community Activity Restrictions, the extension of the PPKM policy by the government surely creates social barriers to mentoring and implementing the program during the COVID-19 pandemic (PPKM). To reduce crowds and the transmission of the Covid-19 virus in the community, training and seminars are conducted four to five times per program session. West Java's Human Initiative provides aid through the use of mass media, specifically through the implementation of E-learning through special class assistance via *WhatsApp groups*. This group can serve as a platform for concerns about the success, problems, and requirements of cooperative and UMKM program development.

COVID-19's mentoring program has been hindered by the growth of a large number of participants in its mentoring group. The WhatsApp group was created for a system to provide assistance without being constrained by conditions requiring interaction with a large numbers of people, which causes crowding.

### **Mentoring Efforts Involving UMKM Actors' Families**

There are still a significant number of older participants who do not utilize cellphones, causing difficulties in the process of assisting product marketing via internet media. Particularly, there is a paucity of product photography talents that will be presented on each business actor's social media profiles. To assist micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (UMKM) in producing and marketing processed products, it is not only done offline, through retail storage of local mementos, but also through social media.

Posting photographs of processed products on various social media sites, such as Facebook advertisements, Instagram, Shopee, and other social media accounts, can be used for product marketing. In an online marketing training initiative, the facilitator invites Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (UMKM) and family members who are comfortable with the internet and cellphones.

### **Social welfare science's practical and theoretical implications**

Social workers as HR provide support and social services to the community based on their expertise, abilities, and values. Social work helps individuals, families, and groups live independently by restoring their roles and responsibilities. Social workers increase clients' social functioning. Purwowibowo (Fahmi, 2019) says social work is important for societal welfare. Community empowerment is one way to increase social wellbeing.

Community empowerment means encouraging and motivating the community to live independently for a decent and productive life. In the empowerment process, social workers can facilitate community resource requirements. Social professionals need micro, meso, and macro capabilities. Social workers have a part in community empowerment, which restores social functioning to make the community autonomous.

In order to empower the community through community empowerment initiatives, social workers at the macro level provide social assistance through Facilitator, Broker, Mediator, advocator, protector.

### **The Role of Social Workers as Social Facilitators**

Social workers' role in empowerment is to build and empower communities through their potential and resources. Social workers can increase the community's strength, potential, and capabilities through empowerment programs. Soetji Andari's (Andari, 2020) research in the Journal of the Role of Social Workers in Social Assistance found:

Thus, social assistance can be understood as a dynamic interaction between the poor and social workers who face various challenges such as: (1) designing programs to improve life both socially and economically, (2) utilizing local resources, (3) solving social problems, (4) creating and opening access for meeting needs, and (5) establishing cooperation with various parties within the context of empowerment.

Social workers are entrusted with establishing effective plans in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the community concerns that can have an impact on empowerment programs. In addition, as social assistants, social workers provide direction and active guidance in the execution of social activities. Here are five social worker duties as a social assistant:

- a. Social Facilitator's Function as a Facilitator The facilitator is responsible for assisting clients in coping with pressure in specific situations by empowering or enabling them to make adjustments independently,
- b. The social assistant's function as a Broker. For compensation, social workers provide a network of social services throughout the community to address the needs of customers,
- c. Social assistants' function as mediators. Social workers are directed to create discord and disagreement among numerous parties,
- d. The function of social workers as advocator. Social workers are tasked with winning a client's case or assisting the client in winning himself,
- e. Social helpers' function as protectors. Social workers are instructed to safeguard the weak and vulnerable based on the client's best interests.

### **Science-Related Empowerment Activities Related to Social Welfare**

Social functioning is the capacity to deal with life's environmental challenges. A decent life is characterized by the existence of a balance between environmental demands and the capacity to handle problems, and vice versa, if there is an imbalance between environmental demands and the capacity to address problems, there will be social dysfunction or social dysfunction.

A condition that causes a person to have false expectations and be unable to fulfill both physical and psychological needs, thereby causing stress, helplessness, and disappointment in his life, so that it is disrupted, is one of the many obstacles encountered by individuals in carrying out their lives and preventing them from properly performing their social functions. social interaction. In this situation, it is necessary to invest in the development of individuals in order to restore social functioning, including through community empowerment programs.

Community empowerment is one of the community activities for overcoming difficulties by efforts and developing creativity in exploiting potential and possibilities to restore the quality of life, as well as one's own social functioning and the environment. Community empowerment is an endeavor to improve the quality of people's lives by restoring the social functioning of the community by strengthening and creating chances for individuals to flourish in life.

Community empowerment is an endeavour to improve the social welfare of a community by maximizing the usage of its own potential and resources. The empowerment program promotes the community as the primary actor capable of attaining sustainable and long-term development through utilizing the environment. Supported by Suharto's remark (2014: 68), the following are the concepts of community empowerment in achieving social welfare for the community, based on the needs, potentials, expectations, and issues that exist in society:

1. The empowerment process is collaborative. Therefore, there must be partnership cooperation.
2. The empowerment process positions the community as a competent agent or subject capable of accessing resources and opportunities.
3. Communities must view themselves as significant agents with the ability to affect change.
4. Competence is learned and honed via life experiences, particularly those that instill a sense of capability in the community.
5. The solutions to individual problems must be diverse and take into account the diversity of the problem's contributing aspects.
6. Informal social networks are a significant source of assistance for lowering stress and enhancing one's competence and ability to exert control over others.
7. Communities must participate in their own empowerment, and they must create their own goals, methods, and outcomes.
8. The level of awareness is crucial to empowerment because knowledge and action mobilization for change depend on it.
9. Empowerment necessitates access to resources and the competence to utilize them effectively.



10. The process of emancipation is dynamic, synergistic, and evolutionary since there are always multiple solutions to a problem.
11. Empowerment is attained through the concomitant growth of other personal structures.

#### 4. Conclusion

The Empowerment of MSME Actors through the Ecodev Program PT. Tirta Investama Plant Subang offers various conclusions based on the overall outcomes of this study based on the reasons that have been presented by researchers utilizing secondary data sources from literature and document studies:

1. The West Java human initiative's implementation of community empowerment has been successful, as evidenced by the increase in the number of cooperative customer members, who make cooperatives a driving force for the community's economy in meeting needs and increasing business productivity to increase people's income. Moreover, cooperatives can free the community from the clutches of mobile bank loan sharks. The implementation of community economic empowerment has an influence on the independence of micro, little, and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) players, as seen by community activities to innovate commercial products so that people may handle challenges relating to packaging, labeling, and marketing. As a result, business actors are no longer reliant on others to sell their products through online and offline networks, thereby contributing to economic growth through increased income.
2. Barriers and efforts in implementing the community economic empowerment program (Ecodev) at PT. Tirta Investama Plant Subang include: (1) Social Barriers in Mentoring due to the implementation of the system (PPKM); (2) Technical barriers in MSME Legality assistance; and (3) Barriers to program distribution due to elderly beneficiaries, resulting in a suboptimal training process. Efforts were taken to overcome hurdles in the community empowerment initiative, including grouping support through *WhatsApp* groups and including the families of company actors in online marketing.
3. Social workers as social assistants who can increase the community's strength, potential, and capabilities through community empowerment programs. As social support providers, social workers serve as facilitators, mediators, brokers, protectors, and defenders. In carrying out their lives, individuals face numerous barriers that prevent them from performing their social functions effectively. In this situation, it is necessary to invest in the development of individuals in order to restore social functioning, including through community empowerment programs. In carrying out their lives, individuals face numerous barriers that prevent them from performing their social functions effectively. In this situation, it is necessary to invest in the development of individuals in order to restore social functioning, including through community empowerment programs.

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