

Local Village Facilitators as Agents of Change Case Study on Community Empowerment in Air Bagi Village, Congcong Subdistrict, Indragiri Hilir Regency

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ABSTRACT

Assistance is one of the important steps that must be taken to accelerate the achievement of community independence and welfare. Local village facilitators have the main task and function of assisting villages in the administration of village government, inter-village cooperation, the development of village-owned enterprises (BUMDes), and local village-scale development facilities. The village of Air Bagi is still very lacking in community empowerment and organization, as seen from the low level of community enterprise and independence. Therefore, local village facilitators are needed as community facilitators to mobilize and empower the community of Air Bagi village. There is one village facilitator in the Congcong sub-district and two local village facilitators, each assigned to assist two villages. The purpose of this study is to examine how local village facilitators act as agents of change: a case study of community empowerment in Air Bagi Village, Congcong Sub-district, Indragiri Hilir Regency, and the obstacles they face. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method, with data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method, with data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation. The results of this study indicate that local assistants in Air Bagi village have not been optimal in providing community empowerment activities in Air Bagi village. This can be seen from the community's dissatisfaction with their performance and the fact that their activities are limited to providing assistance to farmer and fisherman groups. The obstacles encountered are a lack of funding, frequently changing regulations, and the considerable distance to the village.

Keywords: Local Village Facilitators; Agents of Change; Community Empowerment

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SDGs: No Poverty (1); Decent Work and Economic Growth (8); Reduced Inequalities (10); Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (16)

INTRODUCTION

Development is a form of directed and planned social change through various policies aimed at improving the standard of living of the Indonesian people, as stated in the preamble to the 1995 Constitution, which sets out the objectives of national development. The welfare of the people is a goal that has always been pursued by the entire Indonesian nation, from urban areas to remote villages.

According to Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning villages, a village is a legal community unit with territorial boundaries that has the authority to regulate and manage the government and interests of the local community based on community initiatives, original rights and/or traditional rights that are recognized and respected in the system of government of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Assistance is one of the important steps that must be taken to accelerate the achievement of community independence and welfare. Six (6) Local Village Assistants (PLD) in the village community development and empowerment program are essentially collective (team work) in nature, coordinated by one of the village assistants themselves and selected by themselves and/or facilitated by their supervisor. Village assistance has the main task and function of assisting villages in the administration of village government, inter-village cooperation, the development of BUMDes, and local village-scale development facilities.

The existence of Village Facilitators, whose main task is community empowerment, is a manifestation of the implementation of Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. specifically in Chapter I General Provisions, Article 1 paragraph 4 point 1, which states that village community empowerment is an effort to develop community independence and welfare by improving knowledge, attitudes, skills, behavior, abilities, awareness, and utilization of resources through the establishment of policies, programs, activities, and assistance in accordance with the essence of the issues and priority needs of the village community.

Village Facilitators, as referred to in Permendesa Number 3 of 2015 concerning Village Facilitation in articles 4 to 10, state that Village Facilitation is carried out by facilitators consisting of: Professional Facilitators, Village Community Empowerment Cadres, and Third Parties. The article also explains that Professional Facilitators consist of: Village Facilitators (PD) at the sub-district level, Technical Facilitators at the regency level, and Experts at the provincial or central level.

The following is data on community empowerment programs carried out by the Air Bagi Village Administration.

Table 1. Air Bagi Village Community Empowerment Program

No.	Types of Community Empowerment	Activity
1.	Economic Empowerment of Communities	This program covers the empowerment of SMEs, home industries, village-owned enterprises, farmer groups, markets, and other community economic support entities. The empowerment program can take the form of training, workshops, capital, production equipment assistance, infrastructure improvements, and others.
2.	Empowering Communities in Health	This empowerment program can take the form of improving health facilities and infrastructure, promoting and providing information on health programs, and developing disaster-prepared villages.
3.	Community Empowerment in Training and Education	This empowerment can take the form of teacher training, improvement of facilities and infrastructure, educational assistance for underprivileged communities, scholarships for outstanding students, and so on.

Source: Head of Air Bagi Village

Air Bagi Village, located in Concong Subdistrict, Indragiri Hilir Regency, Riau Province, is one of the villages that is interesting to study in terms of the dynamics of community empowerment through the active role of Local Village Facilitators. Despite its considerable natural resource potential, this village still faces challenges in managing development and community empowerment optimally.

There is one Village Facilitator in Concong Subdistrict and two Local Village Facilitators, each assigned to assist two villages. Meanwhile, the technical guidelines for recruiting professional facilitators for the Village Community Development and Empowerment Program explain that each subdistrict will be assisted by two Village Facilitators, namely a Village Empowerment Facilitator and a Village Infrastructure Facilitator.

Village facilitators have a very important influence in village administration, namely in exploring, accommodating, and channeling community aspirations in participatory rural development and capacity building for village governments and village community institutions in terms of community development and empowerment, so that they become the focus of community expectations for programs to be implemented by the government (Restu, 2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Village Facilitator

Village facilitators are positions under the auspices of the Ministry of Villages, Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration with the task of assisting village development in the context of implementing Minister of Villages, Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration Regulation No. 3 of 2015 concerning Village Assistance.

Village

Nurcholis (2011:4) states that a village is a legal community based on strong customs and traditions, resulting in kinship, political, social, economic, and security ties. Generally, villagers make their living from agriculture, have the right to manage their own households, and are administratively under the district government.

Change Agents

Change agents are individuals or groups tasked with influencing, driving, and facilitating change within a social system or organization. They act as catalysts, drivers, and connectors who encourage innovation or change so that it can be accepted and implemented by the community or target group.

Community Empowerment

Soeharto (2006) Empowerment is an effort to make communities independent and develop their potential capabilities, involving two parties: the empowered community and the caring party.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted in Air Bagi Village, located in Congcong Subdistrict, Indragiri Hilir Regency, Riau Province. Qualitative research using descriptive techniques. In this study, the data collection methods used included observation, interviews, and documentation.

Informants act as subjects or individuals who provide information related to the research being conducted. There were 9 informants in this study.

To understand Local Village Facilitators as Agents of Change through a Case Study of Community Empowerment in Air Bagi Village, Congcong Subdistrict, Indragiri Hilir Regency. The concepts used to analyze the data are data reduction, data analysis, and conclusion analysis.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Local Village Facilitators as Agents of Change: A Case Study of Community Empowerment in Air Bagi Village, Congcong Subdistrict, Indragiri Hilir Regency

a. Work Performance

Work performance is the quality and quantity of a person's work in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. The work performance of local village assistants can be seen and felt by the community if they are able to carry out their duties well. However, according to the researcher's observations, the community empowerment carried out by the local village assistants in Air Bagi has not been optimal.

Local village assistants only serve as facilitators in the administration of village government; they do not have the authority to form groups within the community, as this is stipulated in village regulations.

b. Expertise

The expertise referred to is the cooperation between the local facilitator of Air Bagi village and the local community in planning and communication between the local facilitator and the community and village administration in the village facilitation process.

In village planning, local village assistants are not directly involved because they only serve as assistants in reminding and facilitating what development projects are and are not allowed in the use of village funds provided by the central government.

The Village Local Facilitator also said that communication with the village authorities is currently very good, with two-way communication on village development.

c. Behavior

The behavior referred to is the conduct of the Local Village Facilitator in Air Bagi village in providing assistance. Local village facilitators will certainly be the focus of public attention in terms of community empowerment, and their behavior will also be highlighted. In providing assistance for both development and community empowerment in Air Bagi village.

Local village assistants in Air Bagi village have made every effort to be transparent, without hiding anything, from the village funds obtained to the development projects carried out. The village funds obtained are even displayed on large banners so that the community knows how much village funds are obtained each year. Transparency is a must for the government in carrying out its duties as a public servant, including local village

assistants. In Air Bagi village, the transparent behavior of the local village assistants has been felt by the surrounding community.

d. Leadership

Leadership is a potential that exists from birth, enabling one to lead and influence others to achieve goals. A leader is someone who is expected to be able to lead an organization to achieve its goals, as a guide to goodness and a mentor in the direction of truth.

The village facilitator also acts as a mediator in resolving conflicts or issues that arise between the community and the village government. In addition, the local village facilitator also plays a role in mobilizing the community so that they participate in all activities. However, when it comes to decision-making, local village facilitators admit that they have no rights or authority to make such decisions.

The leadership of local Air Bagi assistants was not optimal in carrying out their duties. In fact, there was no direct assistance provided by local village assistants, and this is certainly the responsibility of local village assistants in providing training.

Challenges – Challenges faced by Local Village Facilitators in Community Empowerment in Air Bagi Village, Concong Subdistrict, Indragiri Hilir Regency

According to Pius Abdillah and Danu Prasetya (2008) in their comprehensive Indonesian dictionary, an obstacle is something that hinders or limits the achievement of a goal; a barrier or impediment.

Based on this, the obstacles or barriers in the implementation of the duties of Local Village Facilitators include:

- a. Empowerment efforts have not been carried out as they should have been due to insufficient funding, but the village and local village assistants have worked together to provide assistance to fishing groups as part of community empowerment efforts.
- b. Local village assistants also acknowledged that the village's location near the sea was a major obstacle to accessing Air Bagi village, meaning that it would take a long time to reach the village.

CONCLUSION

Local village facilitators have an important role in assisting village governments with planning, implementing, and monitoring village development and empowering village communities to achieve self-sufficiency. One form of this assistance is community empowerment, which is a step toward creating community independence by organizing community activities, education, and outreach.

One of the tasks of local village assistants is to empower the community in Air Bagi Village, Concong District, Indragiri Hilir Regency. However, the community empowerment carried out by local village assistants has not been fully implemented. This study found that community empowerment was only carried out by providing assistance to community groups consisting of fishermen by providing fishing nets, and not all fishermen received this assistance. Although this assistance can be considered a form of community empowerment, it has not been effective because the assistance provided has not been comprehensive for all groups of fishermen.

Local village facilitators are also not very active in village planning; they only monitor and correct misconceptions in village development. The Air Bagi village community is also dissatisfied with the performance of the local village facilitators, stating that they do not facilitate the community as village facilitators and have not carried out empowerment activities such as socialization and education to increase community knowledge and achieve community independence. The obstacles faced so far are a lack of funding and the difficulty of local village facilitators in reaching this village.

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