



## The Role of Giri Mulya Study Group Community in Improving Community Empowerment

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**Abstract:** This study examined community needs for community empowerment oriented to regional potential. The empowerment was conducted by Giri Mulya Study Group Community using the community-based community resource management process. This community is a form of a development strategy and community empowerment that contributes to controlling and managing productive resources. This research employed the qualitative research method, while the approach used in this research was the case study approach. The research informants were selected using the snowball sampling technique, and data were collected through observation and in-depth interviews. Giri Mulya Study Group Community development had a positive impact on community empowerment in Munggebang village. Cooperation that existed among elements of society can be a significant impetus to carry out an empowerment process. Sustainability of education in the Giri Mulya Study Group Community is the most basic effort in empowering an area, in this case, rural areas.

**Keywords:** community empowerment, empowerment improvement, learning group community

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### Introduction

Villages are areas that have more traditional characteristics than urban areas, so it makes villages a very potential asset of every country. To make villages more developed, it is necessary to develop the community through educational activities. Community independence is a condition that is characterized by the ability to think, decide and do something that is deemed appropriate in order to solve the problems faced by using the capabilities possessed (Widjajanti, 2011).

Society must be able to develop in the context of education. This is stated in the 1990 World Declaration with the theme "education for all" in Jomtien, Thailand. The declaration aims to develop the concept of a community learning center (Asmin, 2017). In other words, society can develop if there are learning activities that come from, by, and for the community itself. Independence also includes various aspects, especially the capabilities of each member of the community.

Learning refers to a conscious and deliberate activity that brings several reasons for efforts to develop community members as human resources. There are several



reasons why humans need to be developed through learning. The first reason is that life is a learning process and experience. The second reason is that learning is an effort to solve problems that always arise in human life. The last reason is that learning is an activity to foster the learning process (Mutamam & Shantini, 2019).

Study groups are very beneficial for the community because learning activities serve as a means of empowering them and an effort to improve the honor of the community who in their current condition are unable to get out of poverty and underdevelopment conditions. Moreover, if it is associated with non-formal education, the study group is useful for the community to solve problems. Besides, through this education, the community can find various solutions that come from the community itself (Bhinadi, 2017).

Each citizen who interacts in learning has their own experiences. Using their experiences, they teach each other because each person's experience becomes learning materials for others in the study group. Those experiences contain new knowledge and/or skills for others, so this situation will become a positive dependency on learning (Slavin, 2015). A state of positive interdependence with one another and facilitators who are able to understand the learners' characteristics should be in place. Adults as individuals who have many experiences, need to implement programs that have short-term goals and are flexible, community-related, environment-based, and learner-dominated in processes (Fordham, 1993).

The Giri Mulya study group community is supported by the role of several community leaders, especially traditional leaders who have a major influence on the sustainability of life related to customs and habits in the village. Each figure has a different task depending on the role that he/she has. This can help the study group to develop more in not only learning activities but also partnerships and long-term sustainability (Shojaei, Wang, & Fenner, 2019). Through study groups and activities, such as youth organizations, trade unions, and political parties, the community is empowered (Pilz & Wilmshöfer, 2015).

Giri Mulya study group community can develop by creating activities offering functional training according to their daily lives. The community is invited to identify the problems that they face and the expectations that the community wants if they are associated with the problem (Rahman et al., 2019). The more people can explore the problem, the more they are responsible for solving the various potentials in the community.

Therefore, learning groups formed by and for the community, managed by the community itself, and supported by community leaders indirectly produce organizations that are rapidly developing in accordance with the expectations of the citizens. In this context, the community as an agent of change will be better prepared to face any changes that occur. The learning process in the community continues with the presence of study groups, therefore, it can have a large impact on improving human resources in the Giri Mulya community.

### **Method**

This study used the qualitative research method. This method was chosen because researchers had a need to present a phenomenon in detail to get more specific results. Besides, the case study approach was used in this study. (Stake, 2005) describes a case study as a method that has an important purpose of researching and revealing the unique

characteristics of the case being studied. The case also served as the reason why the research was conducted.

Informants were selected using snowball sampling. According to (Sugiyono, 2017), snowball sampling is a sampling technique to collect data from key informants. In this technique, key informants can provide information developed according to the instructions given. The researcher only conveys the criteria needed as a requirement to be used as a sample. The informants in this study were the managers of the Giri Mulya study group community. The data were collected through observation and interviews on the role of Giri Mulya Study Group Community in increasing community empowerment.

Researchers as research instruments should at least have the capacity to (a) be sensitive to the environment and predict what is important to support research; (b) adapt to the situation to collect various data; (c) pay attention to all forms of response and consider that each situation is assessed as a whole and can be used as a material to support the findings; (d) prioritize the feelings to explore social situations and considering that the process of exploration requires human interaction; and (e) analyze the data and interpret the findings obtained (Sugiyono, 2017).

Determination of data sources in this study is carried out purposively, where the number of data sources depends on the consideration of the completeness of the information or data needed or to obtain certain information. Data source collection can be repeated until the level of reduction, completeness, or saturation is achieved. Nasution in (Rukajat, 2018) stated that there will be no additional meaningful new information obtained even from a new informant.

The collection of data sources in this study was based on several criteria, including: (a) problems previously faced by the people of Munggugebang village, (b) the learning process in the Giri Mulya Study Group, (c) community encouragement in carrying out community empowerment processes in Munggugebang village, (d) community management, and (e) the role of the Giri Mulya Study Group community in increasing community empowerment.

Informants or resource persons in this study are the managers of the Giri Mulya Learning Community and people living in Munggugebang village, Benjeng District, Gresik Regency. This present study focused on the process and impacts of the Giri Mulya Learning Community in empowering the Munggugebang village community. Secondary data for this study were obtained through observation of the empowerment process in the village. Those data were then used to support the findings of primary data.

The data collection procedure is the most important and strategic process in research. With the right procedure, information that is in accordance with the main purpose of the research may be obtained. In carrying out research, researchers must know the data collection procedures used, thus providing information related to the research objectives. Data collection procedures used by researchers in this study were interviews and observation.

Qualitative research is different from quantitative research. Qualitative research is rooted in a natural setting as a whole, relies on humans as research tools, utilizes qualitative methods, conducts data analysis inductively, directs its research objectives to an attempt to find theory from the basics, is descriptive, emphasizes process rather than results, limits studies with focuses, has a set of criteria to check the validity of the data, is tentative in terms of research design, and the research results are agreed upon by two parties, namely researchers and the research subject (Moleong, 2012). In addition,

Creswell in (Moleong, 2012) explains that in qualitative research, data analysis is an attempt by researchers to thoroughly interpret data, either in the form of text or images. Therefore, researchers must really prepare the data so that they can be analyzed, understood, presented, and interpreted.

This study used the qualitative approach so that data analysis activities were carried out interactively and continuously until they were complete, and the data were saturated. In qualitative data analysis, an indication of data saturation is shown by no more data or new information being obtained. The data analysis activity used in this study is based on Miles and Huberman's theory which includes data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

Data presentation or data display is one of the stages of qualitative data analysis techniques. It is an activity of compiling data in a systematic and easy way to be easily understood, thus providing the possibility of drawing conclusions. The data presentation in research can be in the form of narrative text or field notes, matrices, network graphs, and charts. After the presentation, the data will be combined and arranged in a coherent and easily accessible form, thus making it easier to see what is happening in the field. However, whether the conclusions drawn are correct or not need to be re-analyzed.

The essence of data collection and analysis is to make us get some conclusions that are relevant to our research problem and achieve the project objectives. This is a fairly demanding and creative process that requires a lot of thinking process, perception, and careful care to build logical arguments. All previous work will be devalued if we do not sufficiently draw on the implications of our analysis and take advantage of the insights it provides. We really need to make it clear how the results of the analysis provide evidence for new insights into our chosen subject and respond to specific research problems that were presented at the outset of the study.

This study went through three stages to obtain data through a qualitative approach. The stages include pre-research, research implementation, and post-research stage:

1. Pre-research Stage

As an initial stage of research, researchers needed to develop a research concept by (a) conducting a preliminary study aimed at determining the topic and focus of research based on problems that were related to increasing the empowerment of the Munggugebang village community, (b) collecting information and references from various relevant sources related to the research focus and topic, (c) collecting reference materials related to previous research that was relevant to the research topic, (d) developing research proposals and instruments, (e) preparing a research permit and submitting it to the intended research location, and (f) determining the research informants.

2. Research Implementation Stage

The research implementation stage is a stage for researchers to carry out research in accordance with the intended research location, namely Munggugebang village, Gresik Regency. At this stage, researchers conducted research on the role of the Giri Mulya Learning Community in increasing community empowerment. This stage is essential to collect valid data. In the implementation process, data collection was carried out through two techniques, namely interviews and observations. Data collection was carried out simultaneously with the data analysis process.

### 3. Post-research Stage

The post-research stage is the last in the research. In this stage, the researchers compiled the recorded data obtained from the interview and observation process. The recorded data were then analyzed based on the interactive model by Miles and Huberman. This model includes some stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification. Meanwhile, to test the validity of the data, triangulation of sources and techniques on all the findings obtained during the research process was done.

The type of approach used in this study was the qualitative descriptive approach. Research employing this type of approach describes or makes a systematic description of the facts. In this present study, the researchers also functioned as an important instrument of the process as a whole. Researchers were involved in the continuous experience with informants to obtain information by paying attention to and exploring phenomena that occurred in the field to be interpreted and given meaning to be then adapted to the research objective of examining the role of the Giri Mulya Learning Community in increasing community empowerment.

In this study, the main data source was the results of interviews with the Giri Mulya Study Group Community manager and the community who were involved in learning activities. According to (Mohajan, 2018), qualitative research is a description of the social situation obtained from the results of research through various data sources which are then narrated. In this regard, the data collection techniques used in this study include:

#### 1. In-depth interview

This in-depth interview method was carried out with the managers of the Giri Mulya Study Group Community and the Munggebang village society who were involved in the learning activities. It aimed to collect data about the increase in empowerment activity conducted by Giri Mulya Study Group Community.

#### 2. Participatory observation

In this study, researchers used direct observation by referring to the observation guidelines for the phenomena of the subjects studied. The subject was the Munggebang village society. The purpose of this observation is to collect data on the role of the Giri Mulya Study Group in increasing empowerment activities.

The data collection instruments used were interview guidelines and observation guidelines. During the data collection process, a recording device and field notes (self-report or field note) were also used. The data analysis technique is based on Miles and Huberman interactive analysis which consists of several stages including (1) data reduction which was done by making a summary, category coding, making reflection notes, and data sorting; (2) data display; and (3) data verification and conclusion drawing.

The conclusions that had been made previously were still temporary. If strong supporting evidence was found at the next stage of data collection, there would be an adjustment. Initial conclusions that were supported by valid and consistent evidence were considered credible. Thus, the result of the verification was a complete, comprehensive, and accurate conclusion (Miles et al., 2014).

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Munggebang village Community Condition**

Munggebang village is located in Benjeng District, Gresik Regency. Most parts of the Benjeng sub-district are rice fields, yards, gardens, residential areas, and small and

medium businesses. The majority of the residents are farmers, so they are still heavily dependent on crops.

According to Government Regulation Republik Indonesia Nomor 78 Tahun 2014 Tentang Percepatan Pembangunan Daerah Tertinggal, n.d.), an underdeveloped area is a district where the area and its people are less developed than other regions on a national scale. The people of Mungguembang village show a lack of social empowerment. The indicators of community empowerment by Soeharto in (Firmansyah, 2012) are presented as follows.

1. The awareness and desire to change
2. The ability to increase capacity to gain access
3. The ability to face obstacles
4. The ability to build cooperation and solidarity

The above parameters are used to see the condition of an area related to the ability to develop the potential to be empowered by people from or outside the community. Through these parameters, Mungguembang village is considered not to have the ability to develop potential.

Mungguembang village has lack Human Resources (HR) development. This then has an impact on other problems such as poverty and the fulfillment of basic infrastructure needs such as educational facilities (Puspasari & Koswara, 2016). This issue is caused by the lack of public awareness of the potential of human resources. One of the potentials that can be utilized by the people of Mungguembang village is a youth organization that may become HR drivers as well as agents of change in the village. Unfortunately, the youth organization is somehow unnoticed, and as a result, the village is less empowered than other regions.

In essence, underdeveloped areas have great resource potential, but they are not utilized optimally. This condition leads to a strong dependence on other regions (Putri & Santoso, 2012). In Mungguembang village, there are many natural and human resources that have not been developed optimally because the community relatively has lack competence and income. According to (Maryam, 2016), limited knowledge and income can be factors that hinder village development.

There are mainly two types of village potentials. The first is physical potential which includes land, water, climate, geographical environment, livestock, and other natural resources. Second, the non-physical potential that is shown by the community interactions, social institutions, educational institutions, and village social organizations that include village officials and civil servants (Soleh, 2017).

The village youth organization is one of the potentials of the Mungguembang village community. According to (Soleh, 2017), the potential is the power and ability to be developed in order to improve social welfare. However, the people in the village do not pay any attention to the youth organization although it functions as a forum to develop and empower the village. Youth can make a contribution to community development efforts, but they can also become a burden on society if they do not empower themselves and become a group of unemployed. Thus, there is a need to socialize the importance of the organization (Nursyamsu, 2018).

In addition to the problems above, people in Mungguembang village have lack of insight and experience in creating and managing programs to access local resources. This can happen due to a lack of information and socialization on the role of youth organizations in developing villages and their communities. The youth organization in

Munggugebang village was not active in the local people's productivity and welfare. In addition, the youth organization management also lacks the ability to plan programs that are in accordance with the real needs of their citizens. These problems urgently need to be solved in order to make it contribute collectively to the village government and related institutions.

### **Learning in the Giri Mulya Study Group Community**

In order to optimally utilize the potential of human resources in Munggugebang village, the local government and village youth organization established a learning group community called Giri Mulya Study Group. Based on the results of interviews and observations, it was shown that first, the Giri Mulya Study Group Community succeeded in increasing the empowerment efforts for the Munggugebang village community. Second, the philosophy of constructivism pedagogy education adopted by the Giri Mulya Study Group Community was the ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) education concept with the social-cultural constructivist theory by Vygotsky where learners improve their potentials and abilities so that they develop as learning progresses. Third, the learning outcomes were related to the ability of the Munggugebang village community to empower the village independently and adjust developments. At last, the factors supporting the success of the Giri Mulya Study Group Community was the community enthusiasm; it could encourage other communities to participate in learning activities. Meanwhile, the internal inhibiting factors included the study group participants that did not quite understand the concept of learning, so learning could not run optimally. The external factors were related to the lack of assistance in providing encouragement to the learning community.

Giri Mulya Study Group Community is a forum for the community to obtain proper education and health development facilities. The study group provides programs for all residents, from children at an early age to the elderly. This activity is very helpful for the people of Munggugebang village who previously had difficulties in accessing education and health facilities. Giri Mulya Study Group Community specifically provides services related to educational problems for children from an early age to elementary school age. The study group also conducted health checks for the elderly. However, the focus is the effort to empower the Munggugebang village community by providing learning activities that help children get educational guidance so as to help produce a capable and skilled generation as an effort to empower the village in the future. Today, the learning process in the Giri Mulya Study Group Community shows a good impact on the efforts of empowering Munggugebang village. Children in the village are now provided with more insight. They have been able to develop their literacy, communication skills, and the ability to understand digital developments (Afandi, Junanto, & Afriani, 2016).

Giri Mulya Study Group Community was established based on the philosophy of constructivism pedagogical education by Vygotsky. According to Glasersfeld in (Nurhidayati, 2017), constructivism is a philosophy that emphasizes that our knowledge is our own construction. Bettencourt in (Nurhidayati, 2017), points out that knowledge is not a description of the existing world of reality, but it is always the result of a cognitive construction of reality through one's activities. Believing in this philosophy, the managers of Giri Mulya Study Group Community seek to create lifelong learners who are active in developing their imaginations and ideas to be poured into learning, so that children will have constructive reflexive thinking (Basri, 2018). When viewed from the

educational practice in Indonesia, the concept of constructivism education has not been realized properly because the Education Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP) and 2013 Curriculum (K13) systems which offer a free learning process to educational units which include teachers and students do not optimally implement the constructivism education. Both curricula aim to shape the competence of learning citizens according to their needs and interests. However, the implementation of the learning system did not completely fail. Conceptually, it meant that the government was trying to bring education based on constructivist learning (Setiawan, 2014).

The theory used in the learning activities done by Giri Mulya Study Group Community is a social-cultural constructivist by Lev Vygotsky (Amineh, Jafari, & Asl, 2015). Based on this theory, children can only learn by being directly involved in meaningful activities with people who are more knowledgeable. In this case, it is not only teachers but anyone who is able to provide knowledge to children. Through these interactions, children will be able to improve their understanding and knowledge and can help form other people's understanding in the future. The implementation of this theory in Giri Mulya Study Group Community is aimed at making children able to socially understand the conditions that occur in the village through interacting with other communities, both parents and peers, and then construct problem-solving solutions related to the problems being faced.

The proximal development zone applied to the Giri Mulya Study Group Community needs to be interpreted using the scaffolding method, which views the proximal development zone as a scaffold, or a kind of buffer area or a stepping stone to reach a higher level of development (Daniels, 2017). The concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) proposed by Vygotsky is considered very suitable for the conditions of the people of Munggebang village. Therefore, its application to residents in the Giri Mulya Study Group Community can serve as a stepping stone in empowering the community in general. According to Vygotsky, the level of development of an individual can be divided into two. The first level is actual development, while the second level of development is potential development (Suardipa, 2020). The actual development is shown by how a person completes his tasks and solves various problems independently. Meanwhile, the potential development is shown in a person's ability to complete tasks and solve various problems when guided by adults or when collaborating with more intelligent peers. The gap between the actual development and the potential development is called the zone of proximal development.

The concept of constructivism learning by Vygotsky also suggests several main concepts in learning. The concepts highlight that development and learning are interdependent or interrelated, development and learning are context-dependent or cannot be separated from a social context, and participation in social activities is a fundamental form of learning (Makhrus, Nur, & Widodo, 2014). Those learning concepts are very much in line with the expectations of the Munggebang village community of making the residents more empowered. Thus, children will experience the development of constructivism pedagogy to be used to constructively overcome problems that occur in the environment based on their knowledge and experience.

### **Community Empowerment Process in Munggebang Village**

Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda in (Mustangin, Kusniawati, Islami, Setyaningrum, & Prasetyawati, 2017), state that empowerment is a process done by individuals and groups



to gain power, access to resources, and gain control over their lives. Munggebang village is undergoing an empowerment process so that it can develop into an independent village, has power over its territory, has access to resources, and has control over the sustainability of life in the village. In order to realize the concepts, Giri Mulya Study Group Community shares knowledge with residents regarding social issues that are currently happening, including that they are less empowered than other areas.

The community empowerment process carried out through Giri Mulya Study Group Community does not only rely on managers and educators but also requires participation from the community in order to be in a more empowered and independent state. People who want to take part in learning activities in the Giri Mulya Study Group Community need to understand what the goals of the study group community program are. If a family wants their child to participate in the study group, the parents should not just leave their child alone. They must also recognize what learning processes that their child will go through. The involvement of parents in their children's learning is to perpetuate the knowledge transfer process that occurs in the learning environment so that it remains well constructed even though they are at home (Lilawati, 2020).

Mardikanto & Soebianto in (Pathony, 2019) stated that community empowerment is an effort to increase the social level of a society who are in poverty and underdevelopment condition. In addition, community empowerment is a process where the community, especially those who are poor in resources, women, and other neglected groups, are supported to be able to improve their welfare independently. Based on this description, it can be concluded that community empowerment is an effort to provide power or reinforcement to the community by providing encouragement, motivation, and facilities to develop certain potentials and improve society's welfare independently (Hikmawan, 2017). According to Mardikanto, the purpose of empowerment includes various efforts as follows.

1. Education Improvement

Empowerment must be able to produce better education that encourages lifelong learning.

2. Accessibility Improvement

With the growth and development of lifelong learning, it is hoped that it will improve its accessibility to sources of information/innovation.

3. Action Repair

By improving education and improving accessibility with a better variety of resources, it is hoped that better actions will be available.

4. Institutional Improvement

By improving the quality of activities/actions taken, it is hoped that institutional improvements will be made, including the development of business partnership networks.

5. Business Improvement

Improvement in the aspects of education, accessibility, action, and institutions are expected to improve the efforts made.

6. Revenue Improvement

With the improvement of the business carried out, it is hoped that it will be able to increase the income of families and the community in general.

7. Environmental Improvement

Income improvement is expected to improve the environment (physical and social), because environmental damage is often caused by poverty.

8. Life Improvement

The level of income and improved environmental conditions are expected to improve the conditions of every family and community.

9. Community Improvement

Better living conditions, supported by a better (physical and social) environment, are expected to lead to better community life.

Giri Mulya Study Group Community is an effort to carry out the Community Empowerment Process through the Empowerment and Family Welfare Movement measured based on the Empowerment Strategy (Suharto, 2018). The strategies are further described below.

1. Possibility

Based on the researcher's point of view and the results of interviews on the development of existing potential by conducting training to improve skills, socialization is done so people can change their mindset and perspective about the potential benefits. However, there are many obstacles that must be faced, such as limited budget, lack of support from related OPDs and local officials, and lack of human resources due to age limits, educational background, and habits.

2. Reinforcement

Public knowledge is influenced by cadres who disseminate information about various information such as the importance of education, health, etc. Information received by the community is influenced by the knowledge that they have, how the cadres deliver the information (facial expressions and postures when speaking), and the cadres' approach to the community. Therefore, it is hoped that the study group can change people's perspectives, mindsets, and habits. Especially in this millennial era, it is hoped that cadres possess ICT competency.

3. Protection

People commonly have limited knowledge of crimes that target us and criminal acts existing in society. The implementation of family resilience has not run optimally because there is no place for community consultation. On the one hand, support from local officials is not always available.

4. Support

There is a lack of guidance and no counseling service for the community. Thus, people in the village cannot immediately solve their problems. The community is expected to get training in packaging clean and halal food products. Its' people, especially housewives should be more productive.

5. Maintenance

Whether or not the chairperson is active greatly affects the performance of its management. This also leads to frequent changes of TP.PKK administrators for various reasons. Moreover, the lack of response from the local government causes TP.PKK movement to have no progress. A good management and organizational culture must be owned by PKK movement because if it doesn't work well, effective and efficient goals will not be achieved.

### **Results of Giri Mulya Learning Community Development in Improving Society**

The development of Giri Mulya Study Group Community had a positive impact on community empowerment in Munggugebang village. The success of this empowerment was initiated not only by Giri Mulya Study Group Community but also by all parties involved in the empowerment process, from managers, educators, residents, and parents, to local youths who helped develop this community. It is true that collaboration among elements of society can be a significant impetus in carrying out an empowerment process (Aminah & Prasetyo, 2018). Developing human potential, as well as socialisation, values and skills, must be carried out through educational activities. The implementation of educational practices is directed at the efforts to uphold humanistic values into a solution to this global phenomenon (Sujarwo, S., Trisanti, T., & Kusumawardani, 2022)

### **Conclusion**

The sustainability of education in Giri Mulya Study Group Community is the most basic effort in empowering an area, in this case, the countryside. Munggugebang village community lacks human resources (HR) that can help advance the village development. This has an impact on other problems, such as meeting basic infrastructure needs and educational facilities. Thus, the Giri Mulya Study Group Community has become the center of attention in efforts to empower Munggugebang village community because of the existence of learning activities that help children get educational guidance and help the Munggugebang village community be capable and skilled in some areas.

Munggugebang village is undergoing an empowerment process so that it can develop into an independent village, has power over its territory, has access to resources, and has control over the sustainability of life in the village. In order to achieve this empowerment, Giri Mulya Study Group Community tries to provide learning to residents regarding social issues that are currently happening in the village, including the lack of empowerment when compared to the other villages.

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