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Community Empowerment Through Making Iboni Craft to Improve Community Welfare and The Economic Impact

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Abstract: The people of Rowoboni Village have not optimized the potential of water hyacinths in Lake Rawapening. People only work as laborers picking water hyacinths and selling raw to collectors. It does not improve the community's economy because the selling price of water hyacinths is still lower than that of water hyacinths processed into handicraft products. This study aims to describe the process of water hyacinth Iboni craft community empowerment to improve community welfare and economy. This qualitative approach used in-depth interview techniques with 14 participants consisting of one manager, seven workers, four devices village, one farmer, and one hyacinth collector who are considered to have precise information related to the focus of the research. Data collection techniques in this study used observation, interviews, and documentation. Data validity applied source triangulation techniques, and the data were analyzed through data collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusions. The results of this study show that the empowerment process of Iboni craft consists of 3 stages, namely 1) awareness and behavior formation, 2) knowledge and skills transformation, and 3) intellectual and skills enrichment or improvement. The economic impact of this empowerment program is increasing people's income and welfare. The conclusion is that the empowerment process of Iboni Craft consists of 3 stages: 1) awareness and behavior formation through Dialogical communication or word of mouth to the public, 2) knowledge and skills transformation through group training, and independent training with the manager of Iboni Craft, 3) intellectual and skills enrichment or improvement where the workforce begins to produce independently following consumer demand. The economic impact of this empowerment program is an increase in family income, which can provide the family with a second source of income.

Keywords: community, empowerment, handicrafts, hyacinth

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INTRODUCTION

Development is an effort to support the welfare of the community. The development process cannot be separated from human activities because it is used for development. It is in line with research conducted by (Aswari, 2017), which states that individuals have a role as initiators of national development supported by quality human resources. To answer the globalization challenges, humans must develop their qualities to be competent, intelligent,



Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat, 10 (1), March 2023 - 73 Ari Dwi Setyowati, Amin Yusuf, Abdul Malik, Jingduo Wang

and willing to learn, lead organizations, and collaborate with other organizations on the same basis (Sunarto, 2020)

Based on statistical data, the population of Indonesia in 2022 is 275.77 million people. The high population in Indonesia will affect the national development process if it is not following the number of qualified human resources. Based on global competitiveness at the 2019 World Economic Forum, Indonesia ranks 50 out of 141 countries, still slightly below Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore. It was even worse when Indonesia was affected by the pandemic in 2020, where around 29 million more working-age people were laid off, making the open unemployment rate reach 7.07 percent. Research conducted by Farika (2021) states that the end of the quality of human resources causes the community's economy not to increase and ultimately causes unemployment and poverty. It is because people are powerless to meet their needs. This problem needs to be addressed immediately to improve the quality of human life. One of them is carrying out community empowerment activities.

According to (Nazarullail et al., 2017), community empowerment is part of improving the quality of human life. The goal is to achieve a society that is empowered and can change people's lives in terms of social and economic. In line with the opinion of (Malik & Mulyono, 2017), local governments strive to overcome poverty by analyzing regional potential to be developed into a means or tool of empowerment. (Nazarullail et al., 2017); (Malik & Mulyono, 2017). Out-of-School Education is continuing education and lasts for life. Out-of-School Education houses community-based education programs (Sufyan et al., 2019). Through extramural education, the community gets enough knowledge and skills to be independent and improve their quality of life. Community empowerment programs are one of the coverage areas of Out-of-School Education. This empowerment program aims to optimize the potential of local natural resources so that the quality of life bags of the surrounding community becomes better.

Handicrafts are one of the programs that significantly contribute to community empowerment. The handicraft program is one of the efforts that substantially contribute to poverty alleviation in the local community (Toledo-Lopez et al., 2012). Handicrafts can take advantage of items that are no longer used or have a high selling value if used. One of them is hyacinth. According to Chonsakorn et al. (2019), hyacinth is a weed that has not been widely used in industry but has great potential in various fields. Based on research by Samsudin & Husnussalam (2017), hyacinth plants can be turned into handicrafts with high selling value.

Rowoboni Village is located at the easternmost end of Banyubiru District, directly adjacent to Lake Rawa Pening and Tuntang District. Rawa Pening has various positive impacts on the surrounding population. According to (Abimanyu et al., 2016), the existence of Rawa Pening can open job opportunities and increase income for residents, including Rowoboni Village. The Rowoboni community benefits from the potential of Lake Rawa Pening, namely many people who make a living as fishermen, hyacinth seekers, boat services, cages, peat miners, traders, and parking services for anglers on the lake. But besides having a positive impact, Lake Rawa Pening also has a negative effect. It was revealed by Opande et al. (2004) in (Mitan, 2019) that breeding hyacinths can have positive and negative impacts, such as damage to fishing activities, transportation, and increasing sources of human disease. In addition, for the surrounding community, the growth of abundant hyacinth plants can interfere with the activities of fishermen in the lake. (Abimanyu et al., 2016); (Mitan, 2019). (Abimanyu et al., 2016)(Abimanyu et al., 2016)

Hyacinth populations cause many problems, such as disruption of the biota underneath, and can cause sedimentation (Wijaya, 2018). In addition, according to (Retnoningrum, 2014), hyacinths that grow in swamps, lakes, and calm rivers can harm various parties. For fishermen, they will be disturbed when they are catching or fishing in the swamp. For cage owners, hyacinths often enter cages and must be cleaned regularly. For tour

Ari Dwi Setyowati, Amin Yusuf, Abdul Malik, Jingduo Wang

managers, the boat path will be hampered and often interfere with the rotation of the propeller of the motorized boat. (Retnoningrum, 2014).

According to (Chonsakorn et al., 2019), hyacinth is a weed that has not been widely used in industry but has great potential in various fields. Management aspects of water hyacinths are still limited to economic, environmental, and social aspects (He et al., 2022); (Chonsakorn et al., 2019). In the research conducted (Retnoningrum, 2014). , the positive impact of water hyacinths on the economy is that they can improve the economy as a source of income for the community. While in terms of the environment, it can reduce the number of weeds and make swamps cleaner so that they can support fishermen and tourism activities there. (Retnoningrum, 2014)

But unfortunately, the people of Rowoboni Village have not been able to optimize the potential of water hyacinths in Lake Rawapening. People only work as laborers picking water hyacinths and selling raw to collectors. It can be seen from this situation; the community's economy does not increase because there is no way to use water hyacinths to have a higher selling value.

From such conditions, one of the residents has the idea and creativity to carry out empowerment activities by making handicrafts made from water hyacinth as the primary raw material in Rowoboni Village. This empowerment activity is named 'Iboni Craft,' which means handicraft originating from Rowoboni Village. This empowerment program is intended to empower the community and facilitate people with weaving skills in Rowoboni Village. In addition, people who already or do not have a job can make this empowerment program an alternative source of additional income or the primary source of meeting the needs of daily life so that the level of community welfare increases.

Based on the problems faced by the community around Lake Rawapening, especially Rowoboni Village, this study explores the process of community empowerment through water hyacinths Iboni craft to improve the community's welfare. It also analyzes the economic impact of the empowered community after participating in this empowerment program.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which describes the ongoing situation at the time of data collection, which is carried out based on existing facts. The implementation of the research was carried out from January 2023 to February 2023, located in Rowoboni Village, including the house of the manager of Iboni Craft, workers, informants, and other supporters. The informants in this study were one founder and manager of Iboni Craft and seven members who were empowered in it. There were six supporting informants consisting of 1 village head, one hamlet head, 1 RT head, and 1 RW head, along with one farmer and one water hyacinth collector in Rowoboni Village. Data collection is carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were related to the process of making handicrafts from water hyacinths carried out by Iboni Craft Rowoboni Village and the economic impacts obtained by the community after participating in empowerment activities. Interviews were conducted in-depth to get information about the research subjects by describing their actions, experiences, and opinions. In this study, researchers took documentation through observations and photo interviews with managers and participants using mobile phones. According to (Miles et al., 2014), data analysis is carried out in four stages: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. In this study, the validity of the data used the source triangulation technique. Source triangulation is a technique where researchers collect data from various existing sources because similar data will have better results if extracted from different sources, for example, comparing

Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat, 10 (1), March 2023 - 75 Ari Dwi Setyowati, Amin Yusuf, Abdul Malik, Jingduo Wang

observations with interviews and documentation. So, in this study, researchers will compare data from observational research, interviews, and documentation between informants.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Rowoboni Village is one of the villages in Semarang Regency located on the south coast of Lake Rawa Pening. Rowoboni itself comes from the word "rowo" which means water, and "boni" which means source. So "rowoboni" means a source of water. The potential of the area in Rowoboni Village is quite diverse, namely emerging water bath tourism, Langen Tirta fishing, MSMEs handicrafts from water hyacinths, cottage industries in the form of petul chips, criping chips, cassava and banana chips, sweet bread, and white bread, salted eggs, and brick artisans. Meanwhile, regarding the potential from nature, namely the region's potential in agriculture and fisheries. It is because many residents still have paddy fields for farming and cages around the Pening swamp, which is a potential source of the Rowoboni Village area. This natural potential, of course, can be a pull for the economic elevation of Rowoboni Village itself.

One of the natural resources is water hyacinth. Hyacinths have not been widely used as products with high selling value. It is because the quality of human resources is still low. Therefore, an empowerment program is required.

Community empowerment is carried out to empower people to live more empowered, independent, and prosperous lives sustainably. In empowerment, of course, there are several processes or stages so that the community can change for the future, likewise with community empowerment carried out by Iboni Craft. There are several stages or procedures in empowering the people of Rowoboni Village. The community utilizes the potential of natural resources, namely large water hyacinths in Rawa Pening. Community empowerment through water hyacinth handicraft Iboni craft was founded by Mrs. Uswatun Chasanah in 2017 to utilize the potential of water hyacinths in Lake Rawapening and help to reduce the unemployment rate in Rowoboni Village. It aligns with Mariatun & Rizka's statement (Mariatun & Rizka, 2019) that community empowerment through non-formal education programs can be one solution to the unemployment problem through entrepreneurship training that utilizes existing local potential. (Mariatun & Rizka, 2019). (Mariatun & Rizka, 2019)

Iboni Craft tries to make the people of Rowoboni Village aware of the management of water hyacinths, which are plants that pollute the environment and can interfere with economic activities around Lake Rawa Pening. Hyacinths can have a higher selling value if the community knows how to use them well. According to (Sujarwo et al., 2017), community change toward civil society can be achieved through community empowerment activities in community education, organizational development, improving family welfare, and national economic development. (Sujarwo et al., 2017)(Sujarwo et al., 2017)

In addition, this empowerment is expected to improve the quality of human resources in Rowoboni Village. Based on the results of research conducted at Iboni Craft, there are three stages in the empowerment process, namely 1) awareness and behavior formation, 2) knowledge and skills transformation, and 3) intellectual and skills enrichment or improvement.

Community Empowerment Process through Hyacinth Iboni Craft

Community empowerment activities through Iboni Craft hyacinth handicrafts are carried out gradually and sustainably. The community empowerment process in Iboni Craft follows Mardikanto's opinion (Mardikanto & Soebianom, 2017). Social, economic, and political

Ari Dwi Setyowati, Amin Yusuf, Abdul Malik, Jingduo Wang

change empowers and strengthens community capabilities through a participatory shared learning process so that behavior changes occur in all stakeholders (individuals, groups, institutions) involved in the development process to realize an empowered, independent, participatory, and increasingly prosperous life sustainably.

This empowerment program is implemented by utilizing the existing natural potential, namely water hyacinths in Lake Rawa Pening. It aligns with Mariatun & Rizka's statement (2019), which said that community empowerment through non-formal education programs could be one solution to overcoming unemployment problems through entrepreneurship training that harnesses existing local potential.

Iboni Craft tries to make the people of Rowoboni Village aware of the management of water hyacinths, which are plants that pollute the environment and can interfere with economic activities around Lake Rawa Pening. Hyacinths can have a higher selling value if the community knows how to use them well. According to Sujarwo et al. (2017), community change toward civil society can be done through community empowerment activities such as community education, organizational development, improving family welfare, and national economic development. Through the empowerment carried out by Iboni Craft, the people of Rowoboni Village are made aware of water hyacinths that have more selling value if used correctly, then guided and accompanied in the training process so that the community understands and can be empowered to achieve independence in the future. It follows the empowerment theory according to (Subejo & Supriyanto, 2005) (Margayaningsih, 2019). They stated that the community empowerment process is a deliberate effort to provide facilities to local communities in planning, deciding, and managing existing location resources through collective action and networking so that they are economically, ecologically, and socially independent.

The Stage of Awareness and Behavior Formation

The stage of awareness and behavior formation carried out by Iboni Craft is through dialogical communication. The management of Iboni Craft carries out dialogical communication by inviting the community through word of mouth to participate in this empowerment program. Initially, the manager asked the surrounding neighbors to learn to weave hyacinths, then joined one person and increased one by one. In addition, the senior workforce also invites new people to join this program by coming directly to the manager's house or learning directly with the senior workforce.

The dialogical communication by managers to workers is to make people aware that water hyacinths can be used as a handicraft item with a higher selling value than just selling wet or dry to collectors.

The awareness stage carried out by Iboni Craft is by providing understanding to the community who participate in Iboni Craft empowerment activities to build mutual trust in each other, the spirit of learning, and working to improve the quality of life. Therefore, the community will realize and develop its capacity to improve the family economy. Dialogical communication under Freire's opinion (Mulyatno & Pradana, 2022)

"Dialogical communication is essential for creating shared experiences in the learning process."

Dialogical communication aligns with (Shih, 2018a) opinion:(Shih, 2018b)(Shih, 2018b) "Hence, dialogue contains reflection and action. Dialogue is not only theoretical activity but also practice activity." It means that dialogic communication occurs due to reflection and action, not only theory but also practical activities.

The awareness stage carried out by Iboni Craft follows Feire's theory in (Madro'i, 2012); namely, the process of awareness refers to the concept of dynamic liberation and complete

Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat, 10 (1), March 2023 - 77 Ari Dwi Setyowati, Amin Yusuf, Abdul Malik, Jingduo Wang

humanity. Awareness is a process of making a person aware and aware of himself, others, and the surrounding environment. It can be seen how Iboni Craft uses dialogical communication in the form of word of mouth to introduce the process by empowering Iboni Craft to the community.

Iboni craft managers can be called agents of change. It is equivalent to the opinion of (Amalia et al., 2017), who said that "change agents have a sense of empathy because this trait will direct a sense of concern for the community to make changes for the better." It proves that empathy is the most essential part of a change agent. The manager of Iboni Craft tries to help the community changes their way of thinking along with the times. (Sawalha et al., 2017) (Amalia et al., 2017).

The Stage of Knowledge and Skills Transformation

After the community goes through the awareness and behavior formation stage, the next stage is the transformation and proficiency of skills (Prasetyo et al., 2021); (Rahma et al., 2019). This transformation stage stimulates people's openness to new insights and basic skills (Sulistyani et al., 2017). Iboni Craft carries out the transformation stage by training its workforce as a transfer of knowledge about making crafts from hyacinth stems.

Recently, the community has begun to learn about knowledge and skills through training activities. It is the opinion of (Gayatri et al., 2017), namely: in general, empowerment activities are carried out through training. Skills training included in the category of nonformal education is classified into three parts, namely a) activities oriented towards developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of workers, b) activities for young people to be ready to work, and c) activities designed to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of people outside the world of work.



Figure 1 Craft Product Making Activities together with YDBA.

Figure 1 shows that Iboni once held training on making handicraft products together with YDBA (Dharma Bakti Astra Foundation) in 2017. This activity is carried out in groups with members of the Iboni Craft work. YDBA is a companion of an empowerment program that aims to train managers and workers to make products with a more sophisticated form that varies according to the times. In addition, YDBA helps Iboni Craft make Instagram a promotional medium for marketing the products.

Ari Dwi Setyowati, Amin Yusuf, Abdul Malik, Jingduo Wang

It is the empowerment principle expressed by Dedeh (Maryani & Nainggolan, 2019), namely the participatory principle, which states that: "In the empowerment program, a process that can stimulate independence is required, which is participatory, planned, implemented, supervised and evaluated by the community itself. To reach this level, a highly committed companion is required."

In addition, they carry out independent training activities at the homes of the workforce. Independent training is carried out conditional between managers and workers in each worker's home.



Figure 2 A press machine tool used to produce woven hyacinth sheets2

The Stage of intellectual and skills enrichment or improvement

The third stage in the empowerment program is intellectual enrichment or improvement (Mulyono, 2017). At this stage, the community has achieved independence. The community is directly involved in producing Iboni Craft handicrafts to create innovations and act as subjects of development.

The enrichment stage is characterized by workers who have become independent of production. The workforce can already carry out handicraft production after receiving training from Iboni Craft managers and from workers who have been experts before. It is by the statement (Yusuf, Susilo, Mardliyah, & Nugroho, 2022); (Slavin, 2015) states that everyone interacting with learning has their own experience. That experience will be used to share skills and become learning material for others in a positive study group. (Yusuf, Susilo, Mardliyah, & Nugroho, 2022). (Yusuf, Susilo, Mardliyah, & ..., 2022)

Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat, 10 (1), March 2023 - 79 Ari Dwi Setyowati, Amin Yusuf, Abdul Malik, Jingduo Wang



Figure 3 A worker presses dried hyacinths.

Figure 3 shows workers carrying out hyacinth press activities that have dried into handicraft products. Labor produces according to consumer demand. The resulting items are hats, bags, slippers, flowerpots, and tissue holders. It is under the principle of self-reliance empowerment. (Maryani & Nainggolan, 2019) states, "The principle of self-reliance is a principle that values and prioritizes the community's ability more than other parties. The point is not to view people with low incomes as objects without skills but as subjects with low skills.

The enrichment stage carried out by Iboni Craft is by providing opportunities for Iboni Craft artisans to produce crafts with their innovations and creations according to what has been taught by the manager. The manager also tries to distribute orders evenly from consumers so that the artisans remain productive daily. Although the workforce from Iboni Craft has not been able to market their handicraft products independently, the workforce feels happy to be able to learn how to make handicrafts by utilizing the potential or existing natural resources, namely water hyacinths in Lake Rawapening.

The paradigm of community empowerment in Indonesia starts from an essential thought that community development can run automatically if a community is given rights and freedoms in managing its human resources and using them for community development. Furthermore, from the paradigm of community empowerment, community empowerment models will emerge, including 1) the Community development model, 2) the Community participation model in empowerment 3) the Decentralization model. With this empowerment program, the community benefits because they get helpful knowledge to improve the family economy.

Based on the statement above, the manager of Iboni Craft acts as an agent of change. It can be seen in the ability of managers to organize a group in training activities. The manager has creative ideas and innovations to utilize the potential of existing hyacinths into a craft item with high selling value. The manager also has good communication skills so that he can invite neighbors around to care about the environment and can be a source of income for the family economy. The actions taken by the management of Iboni Craft can also be called part of social entrepreneurship because it aims to overcome economic and sausage problems using a practical, innovative, and sustainable approach for the community.

For the mentoring program from Iboni Craft itself, Mrs. Uswatun as the owner and manager always accompanies her workforce in the production process. The mentoring process is carried out through WhatsApp groups. The WhatsApp group was formed to monitor and mentor the producing workforce so the manager knows the production progress. The

Ari Dwi Setyowati, Amin Yusuf, Abdul Malik, Jingduo Wang

mentoring process carried out so far is that Mrs. Uswatun continuously monitors the workers from the WhatsApp group related to the product being worked on. So, the term product has been completed in the photo, then sent to the group and assessed by Mrs. Uswatun.

Economic Impact after Community Participating in Iboni Craft Empowerment Activities

A community empowerment program will undoubtedly impact the community that participates—Likewise, the implementation of community empowerment through water hyacinth handicrafts is carried out by Iboni Craft. The community certainly feels the impact or benefits economically after participating in this empowerment.

Based on the research results, people who have participated in empowerment activities carried out by Iboni Craft obtained economic impact or benefit. They can get additional income to meet their daily needs. They can also be the primary income source if they get orders for various products from consumer demand. It is supported by Sucipto & Sutarto (2015), who states that community empowerment is part of non-formal education to improve community skills and develop the community through life skills education. It is implemented to empower the community and strengthen its economic status.(Sucipto & Sutarto, 2015). (Sucipto & Sutarto, 2015)

Iboni Craft empowerment activities can overcome unemployment problems in Rowoboni Village and improve the economy of the Rowoboni community. This is as expressed by (Mardikanto, 2013) in (Windiasih, 2021), namely one of the goals of empowerment is to improve life (better living). Where income levels can increase and can improve the lives of every family and community. Additional income from producing Iboni Craft handicrafts can be used to meet daily needs, such as for children's snacks, meals, and savings. The community's economy is increasing so that welfare can improve.

Some people in Rowoboni Village make weaving hyacinths at Iboni Craft their primary job. In general, housewives participate in this empowerment program. Housewives who produce handicraft products such as parcel boxes, tissue holders, flower vases, and others get higher incomes due to consumer demand. However, housewives who produce woven sheets only make a side income because they have their primary job as farm laborers. So, they will do production when there is demand from consumers and for supplies or stocks in the Iboni Craft storefront.

CONCLUSION

The process of community empowerment through Iboni Craft consists of 3 stages: a) awareness and behavior formation through Dialogical communication or word of mouth to the public by Iboni Craft managers. In addition, senior workers also invite their friends to join this empowerment program. b) knowledge and skills transformation through group training and independent training. Group training is carried out at the house of the manager of Iboni Craft with workers from Iboni Craft and accompanied by YDBA. Independent training is carried out at the homes of each worker. c) intellectual and skills enrichment or improvement carried out by involving the workforce in producing handicrafts independently according to consumer demand. The manager is still assisting, and when the order has been completed, the workforce deposits it to the manager, and the finishing process is carried out. The economic impact of this empowerment program is an increase in family income, which can provide the family with a second source of income. Furthermore, it can reduce unemployment and improve the quality of human resources in Rowoboni Village.

Ari Dwi Setyowati, Amin Yusuf, Abdul Malik, Jingduo Wang

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