

Strengthening the Economy through Empowering Grape Farmers in Duyu Village

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Abstract. *The natural disaster that occurred in 2018 in Palu City had an impact on the economic condition of the community. Almost all regions felt this impact. One of the areas also affected is Duyu Village. This is one of the reasons for community empowerment through grape farming. The aim of this empowerment is to encourage people to create new jobs after natural disasters which cause a downturn in the community's economy. The method used in the empowerment process starts with mapping, local asset mobilization, monitoring and evaluation. The results of the empowerment carried out in Duyu Village were able to optimize local assets in the village and strengthen the community's economy after experiencing an economic downturn due to natural disasters.*

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INTRODUCTION

Community empowerment is an intervention for the community to provide independent reinforcement so that they are able to solve the problems they face. Empowerment generally leads to change for the better. In the empowerment process there must be change agents and people who want change. The intended changes lead to changes in knowledge, behavior and skills in order to improve community welfare (Sedyastuti, 2021). According to Faulks et al. (2021), in an empowerment process there are several stages of the process carried out, namely studying and organizing scenarios, uncovering the past, dreaming of the future, mapping assets, mobilizing assets and monitoring and evaluating. Several stages of empowerment are not carried out in one go but are created repeatedly and continuously (Nyein et al., 2021). In another opinion, Gidden also stated that in a social practice there are agents and structures that influence each other (Collier, 2020).

Kunyanti & Mujiono (2021) explains that empowerment is an effort made to try to achieve community welfare. This is done by changing people's mindset to be independent and create competitiveness. An empowerment process also requires active participation from the community. Forms of community empowerment can take the form of mentoring (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021), forming community institutions, creating job opportunities, re-cultivating local wisdom which can be used as social capital and various other activities that can be carried out continuously (Duan & Aragon-Camarasa, 2022; Walther & Walther, 2024).

Duyu Village is also one of the sub-districts in Palu City that was affected by the 2018 earthquake (Ismeti et al., 2023; Triyanti et al., 2022). Many people lost their livelihoods as a result of the disaster. Seeing the demographic potential of Duyu Village, which is in a lowland area with

fairly fertile soil and sufficient irrigation sources throughout the year, makes grape farming possible in this village.

Empowerment begins with one of the communities as an empowering agent who begins to initiate grape plants to other communities. To date, the recorded area of land that has been managed as a wine plantation has reached ± 1.2 with 1,1137 grape trees planted on the land. This area has also been used as an agrotourism area which can provide additional income to the community. This empowerment process is rooted in the community's economic problems after the 2018 earthquake, but by looking at local assets, namely the demographic conditions of land suitable for farming and the community's desire to move to make changes so that the entire empowerment process can be carried out.

METHODS

The method used in the empowerment process is a participatory method. Participatory methods are methods applied in community development that involve the community being actively involved in trying to improve their situation (Harahap, 2020). The approach used is a case study (case study approach). The case study approach is a qualitative approach used to try to get a picture of the problems experienced by the community and provide appropriate solutions to resolve these problems. The right solution to the problems experienced by the Duyu Village community is a process of community empowerment by increasing the existing capacity of the community and its environment. This process goes through several stages as follows:

Mapping

At this stage, problems are mapped, the capacities possessed by the community, and alternative solutions to problems. The problem and potential mapping process was carried out through an FGD process involving several stakeholders and the community.

Mobilize Assets

Based on the mapping results, the assets owned by the community in Duyu Village include physical environmental assets, individual assets and institutional assets. Physical environmental assets are geographical conditions and irrigation conditions in Duyu sub-district that support agricultural activities. Furthermore, individual assets take into account the demographic conditions of the duyuu community whose age is still in the productive age range of 15-64. There are 76 families who are willing to actively participate in the empowerment process. Several people who also have experience growing grapes have become a benchmark for other communities. Third, institutional assets, namely the government, as well as farmer groups in the community positively support empowerment activities carried out in Duyu Village. After everything has been mapped, the initial stage is to form a pilot group to carry out the empowerment process.

Monitoring and Evaluation

After all assets have been mobilized to carry out the empowerment process, the next stage carried out is monitoring and evaluating empowerment activities. At this stage, monitoring of developments and obstacles in the empowerment process is carried out.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The naming of the Duyu sub-district is based on the local wisdom of the Kaili ethnic group which names places based on events. Duyu means landslide because a landslide has occurred in this area. Duyu Village is a Tatanga sub-district, Palu City, part of which consists of hills. Duyu Village is crossed by the Lewara River for 1 kilometer. The following is a map of Duyu Village:

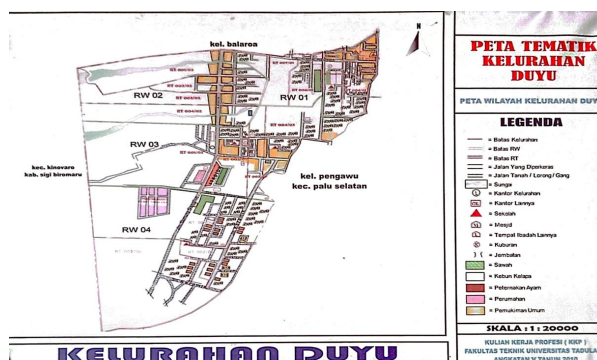


Figure 1. Map of Duyu Village

Source: Duyu District Office

One of the potentials that Duyu Village has is that its people are dominated by those of productive age and are willing to get involved in empowerment activities. The following is a table of the population of Duyu Village:

Table 1. Population of Duyu Village by age group

No.	Age Group (Years)	Number (People)
1.	0-4	526
2.	5-9	476
3.	10-14	463
4.	15-19	658
5.	20-24	730
6.	25-29	511
7.	30-34	466
8.	35-39	448
9.	40-44	443
10.	45-49	386
11.	50-54	301
12.	55-59	218
13.	60-64	148
14.	65-69	97
15.	70-74	50
16.	>75	50
Total		5.794

Source: Duyu sub-district office data for 2020

All the potential possessed by Duyu Village is the initial factor that supports the implementation of community empowerment programs in the area.

Duyu Rise Grape Farmers Group

This group was formed as a pilot group in implementing grape farming in Duyu Village. At the beginning of its formation, this group numbered 7 people, but as the program progressed and grape farming in Duyu Village had a positive impact on the community, the number of this group also increased to 25 people.



Figure 2. Duyu Bangkit Grape Farmers Group

The Duyu Bangkit Grape Farmers Group was formed to manage grape plantations in Duyu Village which has now grown to 12 points of land with ± 1200 successfully planted grape trees. The types of grapes grown also vary, from local grapes to imported grapes. The land managed is the land of group members who voluntarily offer their unproductive land to be used as demonstration gardens. With grape cultivation, Duyu Village has the opportunity to be developed into an agrotourism area.

Empowerment Process through Grape Farming in Duyu Village

The empowerment process carried out in Duyu Village aims to restore and improve the economy of the community affected by the disaster in 2018. This activity takes the form of skills development through farmer groups which are used as pilot groups. Looking at the existing reality, the process of empowering grape farming in Duyu Village is in line with what was expressed by Yang & Loopmans (2023) that community development can be carried out by optimizing the potential of the village. This has been demonstrated through grape farming carried out in Duyu Village by optimizing all existing potential.

Grape cultivation begins with the seeding process. Funding for this process is carried out independently by the community. The initial capital collected was IDR 7,000,000 which was used to purchase materials, seeds and other equipment to support the agricultural business carried out.



Figure 3. Grape seeding process

After seeding, the grape plants are then planted on the land provided. Grapes are plants that require special care, so knowledge and skills are needed in the care process. Farmers are also trained in the grape care process in Duyu Village.



Figure 4. Grape pruning training

The vineyard in Duyu Village was successfully developed by the farmer group that was formed. This training is provided by utilizing people who have experience growing grapes. Several people in Duyu Village have experience growing grapes so they can transform their knowledge and experience to other communities.



Figure 5. Grape plants that are already bearing fruit

The picture above shows grape plants waiting for harvest. At harvest time, grapes are usually sold at IDR 65,000 per kilogram for local grapes, while imported grapes are sold at a higher price, reaching IDR 85,000 per kilogram. The proceeds from grape sales are managed by the Duyu Bangit group to be used as capital for subsequent planting. If profits are obtained, they will be set aside for village development and distributed to group members.

Monitoring and evaluation are carried out at each stage in the empowerment process. The form of monitoring carried out is also adapted to the culture of the surrounding community. The people of Duyu Village like to gather and tell stories to each other. The monitoring and evaluation process is packaged with an activity called Ngobras (fun chat). In this Ngobras activity, each member can tell stories and exchange opinions with each other.

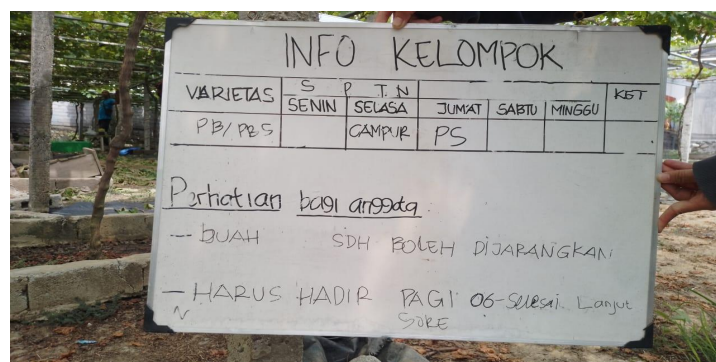


Figure 6. Duyu Bangkit Group Information Board

The monitoring and evaluation process included in this ngobras activity is carried out routinely every Saturday afternoon or evening. Chatting is usually done in the vineyard or at the house of one of the group members while sitting and enjoying coffee. They often chat in the garden after they work.



Figure 7. Weekly Ngobras (Happy Chatting) of the Duyu Bangkit Group

Ngobras is a means of communication as well as monitoring and evaluation. Problems in the agricultural process are raised in this activity. The problem is discussed with group members to find a solution to the problem. When chatting, group members also discuss plans that will be carried out, both short and long term. This Ngobras activity was carried out not only as an effort to maintain the sustainability of grape farming but also to strengthen the relationship between each group member.

Supporting Factors

The success of the community empowerment program carried out in Duyu Village through grape farming cannot be separated from several factors that support the process. The main supporting factor comes from several communities who want change after the disaster they experienced. Second, the physical environment of Duyu Village is suitable for grape plants so that the planting to harvest process can be carried out (Khan et al., 2020). Third, local government support is also a strength in the empowerment process, the government even encourages Duyu Village to become an agro-tourism area because of grape cultivation. Fourth, the social capital that still exists in society, such as a sense of solidarity, makes the Duyu Bangkit farmer group remain enthusiastic in every process it goes through, even as its group members increase.

Inhibiting Factors

Every community empowerment program definitely has obstacles and challenges that must be faced (Siregar, 2021). In the initial process of implementing this program there were also obstacles and challenges that had to be faced. First, change people's mindset. Trying to change the mindset of people who are used to expecting government assistance after a disaster to an independent and competitive mindset is not an easy thing. Introducing grapes to be accepted as an agricultural crop that can be cultivated in Duyu Village is also quite difficult. This is because most people are not familiar with this type of grape plant, although several people in Duyu Village have planted it. Second, initial capital for the empowerment process. All initial capital used in this empowerment process comes from community self-help. Some people are also willing to use their land as gardens without rent. Third, the marketing promotion process is also an obstacle. The grapes are still marketed around the Palu city area and some are still sold traditionally in markets.

CONCLUSION

Strengthening the community's economy can be done through the empowerment process. The empowerment process through cultivating grapes in Duyu Village is an effort to strengthen the economy of the community which has been hit hard by natural disasters. Optimizing all existing capacities in Duyu sub-district is one of the keys to the success of this empowerment process. Apart from that, community participation also has an important role in every empowerment process. Even though there are several obstacles, people who have changed their mindset and

want to be independent and competitive are able to find solutions to the obstacles they face. The empowerment process carried out is not a one-and-done process but a process that should be ongoing. To maintain the sustainability of this empowerment program, support is needed in every aspect. Currently, one of the supports needed by the Duyu Bangkit grape farmer group is the marketing process. Through this article, it is hoped that it can become a reference for the local government to provide intervention on this matter.

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