



**TECHNIUM**  
**SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL**

**Vol. 16, 2021**

**A new decade  
for social changes**

[www.techniumscience.com](http://www.techniumscience.com)

ISSN 2668-7798



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## Community Development to Empower Intellectually Disabled Community Beyond The Program “Karangpatihan Bangkit”

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**Abstract.** People with intellectual disabilities in Indonesia are a group that needs targeted support in their lives. Everyone has the right to a decent life which is adaptive to his or her health and well-being. Karangpatihan is a village called *Kampung Idiot* (Idiot Village) because 86 of its people suffer from various levels of intellectual disabilities. A community development program in the form of a self-help group (SHG) named Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit aimed to improve the social and economic capabilities of people with intellectual disabilities in Karangpatihan Village, Ponorogo, Indonesia. The researcher applied a qualitative method of research in the form of a case study. Data collection techniques used in this study were in the form of an in-depth interview with the Head of the Karangpatihan Village, managers of the Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit as well as the people with intellectual disabilities involved in the program. Secondary data were obtained through the official SHG Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit reports and mass media news clippings. The results showed that: (1) the community development program was successfully implemented by mentoring people with intellectual disabilities through various training activities such as crafts, catfish cultivation, animal husbandry as well as batik making; (2) the success of the program was supported by the active role of facilitators and the participation of local communities. The program was able to improve the lives and skill repertoire of the intellectually disabled. Therefore, they are able to be independent and creative while having a job and an income.

**Keywords.** community development, mentoring, intellectual disability, independent, creative

### Introduction

People with intellectual disabilities in Indonesia are a group that needs targeted support in their lives. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states that everyone has the right to a decent life for his or her health and well-being. Every person who is jobless, sick, disabled, elderly or under other conditions that can cause a decrease in their standard of living, inherently has the right to security (Institute for Community Study and Advocacy). People with intellectual disabilities in Indonesia are vulnerable to discrimination due to a lack of information and awareness on diseases, treatment, education, public access, and limited job opportunities. Job opportunities for disabled people, which also includes people with intellectual disabilities, are still at an overall low. Their disability greatly impacts the fulfillment of daily life and so many of them are dependent on consumptive assistance from others. Based on the Data and Information Center of Social Welfare of the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs in 2007, the

number of people with disabilities reached 2,364,000, this number includes those with intellectual disabilities.

According to Special Olympics Indonesia, the number of people with intellectual disabilities in Indonesia had reached six million or about 3% of the total population. This situation is predicted to continue increasing, along with the growth of the population growth and various other factors that trigger the increased emergence in the number of people with intellectual disabilities (Astuti, 2013). One of the causes of the high number of intellectually disabled in Karangpatihan Village is the extreme poverty which causes the difficulty of acquiring nutritious food. A lack in the nutritional intake of the locals results in defects in the fetus and in babies born. Hence, several people in this village have had intellectual disabilities from birth.

The total population in the Karangpatihan Village is 5,746 people or 1,754 families, consisting of 2,924 men and 2,826 women. People in this village live with various conditions, this includes the 261 families who are living below the poverty line. At the same time, the number of susceptible families almost below the poverty line numbered about 558. Additionally, this village is also famous for having quite a large number of intellectually disabled. This is backed by the official data on record of the village which showed that the population of Karangpatihan Village comprised of 893 families on average, and from them 42 families have members with an intellectual disability; or specifically, 86 people suffered from intellectual disability (Profile of Karangpatihan Village). This study aimed to analyze the community development program carried out by the self-help group (SHG) of Karangpatihan Village called Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit that focused on intellectual development as the subject of its community empowerment.

## **1. Literature Review**

Community development is a social activity that aims to improve the quality of life of people by empowering them to emphasize the principle of social participation (Suharto, 2005). It is carried out through a community development cycle that begins with the principle of development, namely the development of concepts, goals, and program objectives based on the community needs analysis (Rahman, 2009: 34). In analyzing the needs of the locals, community development has to comprehend what the actual wants and needs of the community are. These needs are long term and not temporary. The needs analysis was carried out carefully, involving community leaders to explore program ideas to ensure that the needs met are universal, not only serving that of a few people.

The next stage is program socialization that aims to establish the target activities and make the community aware and responsible for the ownership, implementation and success of the program. The socialization process should be carried out through the media with properly communicated information. Community development activities aim to increase public participation and responsibility for the empowerment program implemented. Community participation expressed by Ife (2008: 294) is the primary concept and fundamental principle of community development. It is a form of community empowerment oriented towards achieving the maximum results of program implementation.

According to Zubaedi (2007: 77), agents of change place initial concern on popular rumors, widespread problems, and community needs before conducting community development activities. Hence, community development activities require the role of agents of change. The implementation of development programs also requires community participation because, in the final process, the community will experience the results of the empowerment. Moreover, they do not only act as the subjects but also as the objects within the development. Community development activities aim to build both material and non-material life. Nasution (2012: 89)

provides an in-depth understanding of the concepts that bridge the non-material aspects of development by viewing these activities as a process of acquiring new knowledge, information, and skills. In addition to being a tool, skills are also the result of the development process for those who experience it.

Community empowerment is a concept of economic development that encapsulates social values. However the intended improvement is not only on the economy, but also on prestige, dignity, self-confidence, and self-esteem. The rationale for community empowerment is that the efforts made should be directed at the root of the problem to improve people's abilities. This concept reflects the new paradigm of development, which is people-centered, participatory, empowering, and sustainable (Chambers, 1995). The idea of community empowerment integrates growth with equity.

Community development encompasses a number of activities carried out systematically, planned and directed to increase community access in achieving better socio-economic opportunities and a better quality of life (Budimanta, 2003: 28). Meanwhile, Payne (1995: 165) argues that community development is a joint effort planned to improve the quality of life in the education, health, and socio-cultural sectors. Community empowerment focuses on helping community members who have an interest to start working together, identifying joint activities and carrying out joint activities to meet shared needs.

## **2. Research Method**

This research employed a qualitative approach. According to Creswell (2009: 33), qualitative inquiry is a way of analysis that understands the meaning behind individuals or groups in social or human problems. The process comprised of questions and procedures. According to Bryman (2012):

Qualitative research is a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantifications in collecting and analyzing data. As a research strategy, it is broadly inductivist, constructionist, and interpretive. As such, it has become an increasingly popular approach to social research.

This research is in the form of a case study. Idrus (2009: 57) explains that a case study is a detailed investigation of specific arrangements or events.

The research data was collected in two ways, firstly by in-depth interviews with the Head of Karangpatihan Village (R1), the Chairman of Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit (R2), village officials (R3), and people with intellectual disabilities who had received the benefits of community empowerment programs (R4 and R5). Secondary data were obtained from the official report on record of the community development program of the Karangpatihan Village Government and news about the Karangpatihan Village empowerment program from online media. The data collected were then analyzed with an interactive analysis model. This model consists of three analysis components called data reduction, data presentation, and concluding (Miles&Huberman, 2014). The location of this research was the Karangpatihan Village, in the Balong District, of the Ponorogo Regency, of East Java Province, Indonesia.

## **3. Research Results and Discussion**

### **3.1. Changing the Stigma of Kampung Idiot to Kampung Mandiri**

Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit, the community development program of the self-help group (SHG), is a program formed by the village government to facilitate the process of empowerment activities to improve the economic development of people with intellectual disabilities. It was preceded by the initiative of people in the village to build a place and form a management group for the empowerment of those disabled people. After holding deliberations

and outreach efforts with local people and some village officials, several people were chosen as the representatives of the Rumah Harapan management.

“In the past, training activities to improve the skills of people with intellectual disabilities were still limited. Sometimes, it was done at my house, sometimes at Mr. Eko’s place. Because the activities were not optimal, we finally chose several people to build a place and manage it.” (Chairman of Rumah Harapan management)

Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit was formed to educate, foster, and train people with intellectual disabilities to gain skills so that they can carry out economic activities independently. As quoted from the interview with the Head of Karangpatihan Village below:

“Rumah Harapan is a training ground that aims to educate, foster, and train people with intellectual disabilities to gain skills so that they can have the income to fulfill their daily necessities” (Head of Karangpatihan Village)

One of the managers of Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit further added:

“In general, poor people with intellectual disabilities are trained, guided and accompanied at Rumah Harapan in handicraft making and catfish cultivation. After the management of Rumah Harapan was formed, people moved forth voluntarily to help these people (people with intellectual disabilities)” (Manager of Rumah Harapan)

Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit is an economic empowerment effort that cooperates with the community effort as companions and managers for people with intellectual disabilities. Besides that, they also bring in outside companions to provide special targeted training and assistance. The training and assistance is done voluntarily. Hence their efforts do not cost much money.

The managers of Rumah Harapan work voluntarily to train and empower people with intellectual disabilities. They also accompany the intellectually disabled for every activity. The community development in Karangpatihan Village has several stages. First, problem identification. It is the earliest base process in which the village government determined and classified the problems faced by the local people with intellectual disabilities living in the village.

In early 2013 the Karangpatihan Village Government was encouraged to carry out community empowerment activities for people with intellectual disabilities because, at that time, they were very much dependent on consumptive assistance from the community members. Indeed, this situation required an immediate solution to help them live independently. People with intellectual disabilities are classified into two categories, those who are mentally retarded (meaning they are able to do activities and interact like other healthy people) and those with a severe mental disability (unable to move or even react like ordinary people). The empowerment efforts were carried out on those who are mentally retarded. As a group they initially had very limited capital to carry out business activities. This was the problem at hand that needed solving and the main reason as to why the village government established a community development program through Rumah Harapan to improve the economy of those with intellectual disabilities. The second stage is problem analysis. This stage was carried out by the village government, together with the local community to find a solution to the problems experienced by people with intellectual disabilities. The issues included a lack of capital in implementing programs, lack of facilities and infrastructure in creating programs, and shortage of facilitators to conduct training and activities. The participation of the local community members increased the mass awareness towards community empowerment programs. This then quickened the companion group formation of Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit as a necessity that should be fulfilled immediately for all undertaken efforts to succeed. It was successfully formed largely through the assistance from the village head.

Third, is the Action stage. This stage deals with the appropriate methodology and strategies applied to the community development program. It was carried out by the village government through the mentoring of people with intellectual disabilities. Early on, the managers of Rumah Harapan had to visit the houses of people with intellectual disabilities to persuade them to join the skills training programs. Gradually, as awareness rose they came and participated in the training on their own volition.

The last stage is the evaluation. It was carried out by analyzing the indicators of success along with a survey conducted by the management of Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit regarding the community development programs carried out and its evaluation. This program succeeded in getting people with intellectual disabilities to successfully earn and sustain their own income. After the training, they can earn a daily, quarterly and annual income. The following is an excerpt from the interview:

“Handicraft production and animal husbandry are able to produce income, daily, quarterly and annually. Daily income is obtained from a long-standing handicraft, the doormat, and they can produce about one to five doormats in a day. Quarterly income comes from catfish cultivation. We have a goat farm for the annual income that is done in turns.” (Chairman of Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit)

This empowerment program had succeeded in solving the problems faced by people with intellectual disabilities in Karangpatihan Village. It is successful in changing the predicate of being known as *Kampung Idiot* (Idiot Village) to *Kampung Mandiri* (Independent Village) as well as improving their quality of life in such a way that they are independent, creative, and self-employed income earners.

### *3.2. The Role of Mentoring People with Intellectual Disabilities*

The stages of the empowerment program carried out by the village government are adjusted to the plan previously agreed upon with the community actors, namely training activities, information dissemination, and community awareness. The program implementation stage begins with the training being carried out. The skill training covers craft making, sorting, catfish cultivation, animal husbandry, marketing and other related training activities. The intellectually disabled are trained one on one to obtain the maximum attention given to achieve the targeted learning result.

The training efforts had begun since 2013 at Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit. The village government conducts the training through group counseling and communicating using sign language. The mentoring method is appropriate to develop and empower people with intellectual disabilities because they have the same interaction pattern as other ordinary humans. The managers of Rumah Harapan carries out mentoring in every activity or business training until the trainees (people with intellectual disabilities) are fully able to do it independently.

The trainers teach through simple practices all the while adapting to the condition of the trainees. One such training program is catfish cultivation. It is the first business activity carried out by the village government. The trainees are provided with ponds with a dimension of 1m x 2meters. The training activity carried out focuses on how to feed and harvest the fish as well as ways to clean and drain the pond. The feeding time is determined based on the direction of sunlight since most of the trainees are illiterate. This training is quite easy for them. The following is an excerpt of the interview with one of the managers of Rumah Harapan:

“This catfish cultivation training requires patience because we have to use sign language to communicate. These people (people with intellectual disabilities) should be trained intensively, but with patience, until they finally are able to do it independently.” (Manager of Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit)

The result of the interview indicates that patience is the key to training people with intellectual disabilities. The trainers should first trigger the trainees' interest in catfish cultivation. Furthermore, according to Mr. Samuji, the results of said catfish cultivation is used to meet the trainees' daily needs.

“We, from the management, train the trainees with the ability to cultivate catfish so that they can work independently and use the income of the cultivation to fulfill their daily needs. They can earn about 100-300 thousand Rupiahs each month. We also invite the local community to buy their catfish to support them. Therefore, they can develop (their business).” (Samuji, Chairman of Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit)

The catfish cultivation program proposed by the village government and the managers of Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit runs perfectly like clockwork. The trainees with intellectual disabilities are successful in running the cultivation, after completing their training program. They are also very enthusiastic about catfish cultivation.

Furthermore, they are also trained to make handicrafts such as prayer beads, doormats, and batik. Prayer beads are one of the crafts made from beads that are strung together using thread. According to Samuji, the trainees should be able to count to 33 to be able to make prayer beads. The making of prayer beads is dependent on the level of accuracy in the counting ability of trainees as as they sometimes make a mistake in the counting process.

“These prayer beads require a good counting ability, and the training process is quite difficult because the trainees should always be accompanied during the making process as they sometimes miscalculate the number beads. For example, they have strung the beads together even though the number of beads is not yet 33; when for instance, it is still 27.” (Manager of Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit)

Doormats are one of the handicrafts made that can be utilized in everyday household life. Additionally, it can be made from leftover patchwork. The funds for this training activity comes from donations and the income from selling the doormats made.

**Figure 1.** An Intellectually Disabled Person Carefully Making a Doormat



The process of making doormats can be done either at the Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit or at the home of the trainees. The following is an interview excerpt with the Chairman of Rumah Harapan:

“When there are visits or gatherings, the process of making the doormats is in Rumah Harapan. However, to maximize the results, the trainees bring them to their homes. However, it all depends on their capability. Some of them can work independently while some others still need

assistance from the trainers.”(Samuji, Chairman of Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit, July 3, 2019).

**Figure 2.** The Training Process of Doormat Making by Intellectually Disabled People



*Source: Documentation of Rumah Harapan Manager*

The managers of Rumah Harapan gather and train the trainees one by one. The doormat making training involves the process of color selection, installation of equipment, an arrangement of materials and neat finishing as the final process. The doormats made here are better and neater than those made by ordinary people. Another craft our intellectually disabled are able to produce is batik ciprat. It is a unique batik made by splashing wax on cloth randomly. The result of their batik is uniquely different from one another as they carry out this process manually.

**Figure 3.** The Batik Ciprat Making Process by Intellectually Disabled People



*Source: Documentation of Rumah Harapan Manager*

“Batik ciprat is an empowerment activity carried out for people with intellectual disabilities in the hope that they will be able to produce their own batik to increase their income.” (Eko Mulyadi, Head of Karangpatihan Village, July 3, 2019)

They do not only produce batik ciprat but also batik canting which is made based on custom orders received. Batik ciprat is usually in high demand by officials in the Ponorogo Regency as well as people from the outside areas.

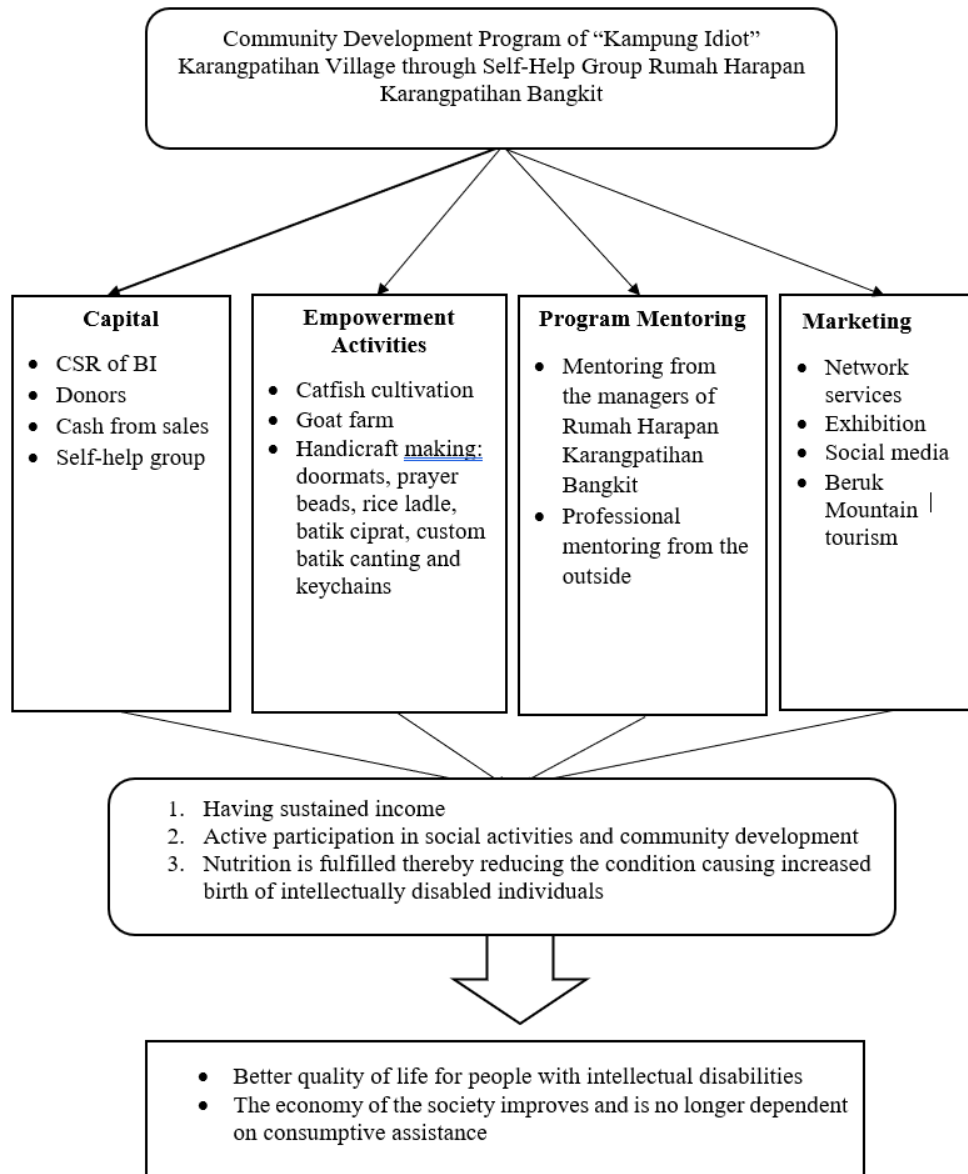
“Sometimes, the making of batik is done in a simple way. They use leaves to create patterns, therefore, the results are unique, and sure, it attracts many buyers’ attention and interest.” (Samuji, Chairman of Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit, July 3, 2019)

Their batik ciprat is priced at Rp 150,000. The making of this batik aims to improve the creative output and socio-economy of people with intellectual disabilities in Karangpatihan Village.

The community development program carried out by the Karangpatihan Village Government comprises of training programs and mentoring efforts for 86 people with intellectual disabilities. People with intellectual disabilities in this village can be intensely involved in skill learning program activities through the mentoring process. The purpose of this community development program is to transform the helpless communities into independent ones. Its execution definitely requires appropriate strategies. As in accordance with the opinion of Budimanta (2003) who mentioned that community development strategies are activities undertaken to improve the standard of living of people carried out in a structured, programmed, and intended way to expand the network of local communities to achieve more socio-economic opportunities and better quality of life.

Community development strategies are fundamentally implemented by considering the aspects of the dissemination of information and development information so that people with intellectual disabilities can optimally receive it. These strategies focus on them as the objects of development. It aims to make them not only the prime development information communicants but also as the development communicators.

**Diagram 1.** Results of The Community Development Program Carried Out by Rumah Harapan Karangpatihan Bangkit



The community development program implemented in Karangpatihan Village has succeeded in improving the socio-economic level and living conditions of their locals living with intellectual disabilities. The village government and managers of Rumah Harapan had trained the eager trainees (people with intellectual disabilities) through group counseling and mentorship. In terms of a communication medium, they used sign language. Such training was found suitable because they had the same interaction patterns with other normal humans.

According to Ife (2008: 178), the process involved in group activities can build confidence and enthusiasm. They are necessary to achieve the goals of building community and society. The process and outcome of empowerment activities are essential as they can add insight on and motivate the intellectually disabled.

The managers of Rumah Harapan act as mentors while conducting every activity or business training by directing the trainees one on one until they are able to do it independently. The managers work voluntarily for the sake of the trainees. Mentoring is part of the community development activity process that aims to ease the implementation of the program. This program has succeeded in assisting people with intellectual disabilities to be independent. Therefore, they are no longer a burden to the local community. The stigma of 'kampung idiot' (idiot village) had turned into that of an independent village. It is in line with the statement of Chambers (1995), who states that community empowerment is a concept of economic development that encapsulates social values. The targeted improvement is not only the economy but also the dignity, prestige, self-confidence and self-esteem of those involved.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The community development program in Karangpatihan Village for people with intellectual disabilities is carried out to improve their independence both socially and economically. Community development is carried out through the following stages: (1) problem identification. It is the earliest process where the Karangpatihan Village Government determined and classified the problems faced by those with intellectual disabilities living in the village. (2) Analysis of the problem. At this stage, the village government searched for solutions to the problems faced, which consisted of a lack of capital, mentoring, and training. (3) Action phase. This stage deals with the appropriate methods and strategies applied in the community development program, which is carried out through mentoring. (4) Evaluation. Accurately measures the success of the program implemented. People with intellectual disabilities can be socially and economically independent through an effective mentoring process implemented as a community development strategy and support by both the government and the local community.

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