

Empowerment of Beneficiary Families of the Family Hope Program in Poverty Alleviation through Independent Graduation

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Abstract

Poncokusumo Village, which is an independent village, has a paradox with the high number of social assistance recipients, especially the Family Hope Program (PKH). This phenomenon encourages the implementation of a community service program to encourage Beneficiary Families (KPM) to graduate independently in a sustainable manner. This community service aims to increase the economic and social capacity of KPM through a participatory approach based on local potential. The method used is Participatory Action Research (PAR), which actively involves KPM in the process of identifying problems, planning, implementing, and evaluating the program. The activities carried out include entrepreneurship training, strengthening KUBE institutions, integration of empowerment programs (Jatim Puspa and PENA), and intensive mentoring based on a humanistic and persuasive approach. The results show that KPM experienced an increase in knowledge, skills, and motivation to be economically independent. Some of them succeeded in graduating independently and running businesses sustainably. The conclusion of this activity confirms that participatory, contextual, and integrated empowerment can be an effective strategy in encouraging independent graduation of KPM. The contribution of this community service lies in the development of a holistic empowerment model that can be replicated in other areas with similar characteristics.

Keywords

Empowerment, Independent Graduation, KPM, PKH.



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Government of Indonesia has made significant efforts to alleviate poverty through various programs, such as health assistance, food supply, subsidies for daily needs, environmental conservation programs, business capital support, and direct cash assistance to target communities (Ariyanda & Arifyani, 2020). Over time, these programs continue to be evaluated. According to the findings of the Poverty Alleviation Committee revealed by (Antico et al., 2017), there are several weaknesses in poverty alleviation programs in Indonesia, namely: (1) programs that are still partial, not yet integrated, and not comprehensive, (2) there are no poverty alleviation instruments that are adjusted to local wisdom in each region, (3) some programs cause new problems so as to reduce public trust in the government's ability to overcome poverty, and (4) bureaucracy that is not optimal, lack of community participation, insynchronization of central and regional policies, and ineffective communication between stakeholders.

While these efforts demonstrate the government's strong commitment, a more integrated and multidimensional approach is needed to effectively address various aspects of basic human needs (Kamis et al., 2017). Re-evaluation of poverty alleviation strategies is very important, considering that existing efforts are still focused on economic aspects without being balanced with human resource development through empowerment activities. As a result, in 2007, a poverty alleviation program based on empowering the poor was introduced, namely the Family Hope Program (PKH) (Evans, 2018).

Based on the Regulation of the Minister of Social Affairs No. 1 of 2018, PKH is defined as a program to provide conditional social assistance to poor and vulnerable families and/or individuals registered in the integrated database of the poor handling program, managed by the Social Welfare Data and Information Center, and designated as PKH beneficiary families. This integrated database is now known as the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) (Stephenson, 2023).

In Poncokusumo Village, PKH facilitators routinely and consistently carry out mentoring sessions through Family Development Sessions (FDS) or Family Ability Building Meetings (P2K2). Facilitators work closely with community leaders and local authorities to ensure each beneficiary family has easy access and full support during the session (Putri & Putri, 2020). The materials provided are tailored to local needs, including training in baking skills, snacks from tuber ingredients, sewing, household financial management, and basic health education (Sethi et al., 2019). In addition, Poncokusumo Village has a strong learning community system where beneficiaries

share knowledge and experiences with each other. The village government supports the community, actively facilitating additional training and workshops (Hildenbrand et al., 2018).

The collaboration between PKH assistants, health workers, and educators in Poncokusumo Village is very solid. Health programs for PKH recipients include the provision of Healthy Indonesia Cards (KIS), which are integrated with health education from local health workers during mentoring sessions. This ensures that beneficiaries get health assistance and understand the importance of healthy living practices (Kintu et al., 2021). The success of Poncokusumo Village in the PKH program is an inspiring example of how the right approach can change lives and sustainably alleviate poverty. Based on the achievements and efforts made in Poncokusumo Village, the researcher is interested in examining empowerment strategies through complementary programs for economic empowerment and mentoring carried out by PKH facilitators and the village government to encourage PKH beneficiaries to achieve independent graduation (Contini & Salza, 2020).

Previous research has mostly discussed the motivation and impact of the PKH program on family economic welfare, such as Nabilah Mokhtar et al. (2023) research, which discusses the motivation for PKH social companions to excel, Boley et al. (2017), which discusses the empowerment of women PKH participants, and Kukuh's (2017) research on the impact of PKH on the level of family welfare. However, research related to graduation in PKH is still limited. Complementary economic empowerment programs are interesting to research because empowerment that increases people's income is one of the effective ways to reduce poverty. This is in line with the poverty alleviation strategy expressed by Gunnar Adler Karlson, as quoted in (Heilporn et al., 2021), namely: (1) short-term strategies include empowering people experiencing poverty by creating adequate job opportunities, increasing income, and improving distribution, (2) long-term strategies involve the development of local self-help, increasing individual dignity, and dignified social welfare.

This article aims to analyze complementary economic empowerment programs as a post-graduation follow-up initiative to increase the independent graduation rate of PKH participants in reducing poverty rates, and readiness to do independent graduation. Information from the PKH graduation study can be used to improve the efficiency of the use of public funds, design more targeted policies, and develop more sustainable development strategies, so that this program has a maximum impact on the families served and the wider community. Therefore, research on the independent

graduation of PKH participants related to poverty reduction in Poncokusumo Village, Malang Regency, is very necessary.

2. METHODS

The method used in this service activity uses the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which focuses on active collaboration between researchers and beneficiaries of the Family Hope Program (PKH) in Poncokusumo Village. PAR emphasizes the community's direct involvement in problem identification, action planning, solution implementation, and evaluation of results, so that empowerment is not only an object of research but also a subject of change. In the context of empowering KPM PKH towards independent graduation, the stages of PAR include: (1) participatory identification and mapping of problems, where researchers together with PKH residents and facilitators identify the main challenges post-receipt of assistance; (2) joint action planning, which designs economic training programs and capacity-building sessions based on local potential and the aspirations of beneficiary families; (3) the implementation of the program in a collaborative manner, where activities such as skills training, financial management, and the formation of joint business groups are carried out with the active involvement of residents; and (4) reflection and evaluation, which are carried out periodically to assess progress, obstacles, and improve empowerment strategies based on input from participants.

In implementing PAR in Poncokusumo Village, the research process is an integral part of the empowerment process itself. The community is not only an object of data, but also an active agent of change, including in formulating solutions and strategies for independent graduation. The participatory reflection and evaluation stage allows for a more contextual and realistic understanding of the local poverty situation, while strengthening citizens' sense of ownership of the changes that occur. This approach also strengthens the social capacity of residents, builds internal support networks, and fosters confidence in living a post-PKH-assisted life. Thus, the PAR method not only produces empirical data but also directly impacts the socio-economic transformation of the community in a sustainable manner.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Poncokusumo Village, located in Poncokusumo District, Malang Regency, is an independent village with a fairly high level of social assistance recipients. Based on the Integrated Poverty Data, 1,518 Heads of Families (KK) are in this village receiving social assistance, with around 310 families registered as recipients of the Family Hope Program (PKH). This research is focused on analyzing the complementarity program

of economic empowerment, which plays an important role in supporting the independent graduation activities of PKH Beneficiary Families (KPM). In addition, this study also examines social assistance activities carried out by PKH companions as well as various forms of KPM empowerment that encourage them to dare to decide to graduate independently from the PKH program.

The economic empowerment complementarity program is designed as a follow-up step to support KPM PKH after they graduate from the program. This program aims to increase the rate of independent graduation as part of poverty reduction efforts. Some of the main initiatives in this program include entrepreneurship training, the East Java Puspa program, the PENA (Pahlawan Ekonomi Nusantara) program, and the KUBE (Joint Business Group) program (Nugroho & Hidayah, 2020).

The entrepreneurship training provided in Poncokusumo Village is quite diverse. The participants were trained to make household products such as dish soap, process agricultural products such as vegetables and tubers into chips or pastries such as nastar and kastangel, as well as make woven and sewing bags. This training program is funded through the allocation of village funds and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) from PNPM MEKAR. Based on the theory of local economic development (Allcott & Keniston, 2018), local economic development can be achieved by maximizing the use of local resources and building partnerships between the community, government, and the private sector.

In its implementation, every stage of training activities, starting from planning, implementation, to evaluation, always actively involves KPM. The spirit of cooperation and collaboration is the hallmark of the implementation of this program. This approach enhances participants' skills and capacity and builds a sense of collective responsibility in running the program (Haniah et al., 2020).

The study results show that the complementarity program of economic empowerment in Poncokusumo Village makes a real contribution in creating a foundation for KPM to achieve independence. The main success factors of this program are: Optimization of Local Resources; MOE is empowered to utilize village natural products such as vegetables and tubers as raw materials for value-added products, which ultimately increases their income. Active participation of KPM; The involvement of KPM in each stage of activities provides a sense of ownership of the program, so that they have the readiness and ability to continue their business independently. Effective Collaboration: Through CSR funds, cooperation between PKH facilitators, village governments, and the private sector supports the program's sustainability and strengthens its implementation. Increasing Social and Economic

Empowerment; Entrepreneurship training provides practical skills to KPM and increases their confidence to start their own business, thus encouraging them to dare to graduate independently from PKH. In conclusion, the locally-based economic empowerment program in Poncokusumo Village can be used as an inspirational model in supporting the independent graduation of PKH participants. This strategy has not only succeeded in reducing poverty rates but also helps create sustainable economic independence in the community (Khaskheli et al., 2023).



Figure 1. Pastry Making Training

In Figure 1. It can be seen that the PKH Beneficiary Families (KPM) are participating in pastry-making training. The participants were busy carrying out their respective tasks, such as preparing ingredients, making dough, printing cakes, and completing manufacturing. KPM's involvement in every stage of the activity provides valuable practical experience. Participants can understand and feel every step of cake making, from preparing ingredients to cooking. In addition, they also acquire better cooking skills, including special techniques such as mixing dough, cutting cakes, and adjusting oven temperatures. With this sense of involvement, KPM feels that they have the end result of the training, which in turn increases their confidence and pride in the work produced.

Collaboration during the cake-making process also encourages interaction between participants. They can help each other, exchange ideas, learn from each other, and create an environment that supports shared learning. Therefore, the involvement of participants in this training not only enriches their experience but also ensures better mastery of skills. In addition to entrepreneurship training, Poncokusumo Village receives funding from the East Java Puspa program, a business funding and assistance program. This program provides an overview of how the village government integrates various community development and empowerment programs, such as PKH and East Java Puspa, to improve the welfare and independence of the community

(Syamsul et al., 2020).

The village government's approach in integrating the PKH and East Java Puspa programs shows awareness of the importance of synergy between programs to achieve the common goal of improving the community's living standard. The East Java Puspa program actively involves the community in the process of planning, implementing, and monitoring the program. This is one of the keys to the success of the program.

The socialization of the program was carried out intensively, showing the commitment of the village government to ensure that the community understood the goals and benefits of the program. The appointment of a special village companion for East Java, Puspa, also reflects special attention to the sustainability of this program. Assistance that is carried out on an ongoing basis helps ensure the success of community businesses supported by the program.

In addition, the accountability deliberation in the East Java Puspa program shows the village government's commitment to transparency and accountability in the use of funds and program implementation. A continuous monitoring and evaluation process is also carried out to identify obstacles that arise during implementation and ensure the program continues to deliver the expected benefits.

So, the entrepreneurship program in East Java Puspa reflects the village government's commitment to improving community welfare through an integrated, participatory, and sustainable approach. This program not only supports the community's economic independence but also strengthens the foundation of inclusive development in Poncokusumo Village.



Figure 2. Documentation of JATIM PUSPA program activities

A supporting program from the Ministry of Social Affairs that focuses on business development is the PENA Program (Heroes of the Archipelago). This program has successfully provided business assistance to active PKH KPM with

productive businesses. The success of this program can be seen from the rigorous selection process to select the appropriate KPM, as well as the application of various training methods, both online and offline, to improve the skills and knowledge of the participants.

The high enthusiasm of the community, as seen from the large number of applicants for this program, shows strong support for the PENA Program. In addition, direct support from the government, such as the visit of the Minister of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia to the PENA bazaar, provides added value and legitimacy to this program.

The PENA program provides business assistance to KPM and training and support to develop their businesses. The goal is to increase the financial independence of KPM so that they are no longer completely dependent on social assistance in the future. Good collaboration between the government, PKH facilitators, and KPM in implementing the PENA Program is an important factor in the success of this program, creating effective synergy to achieve the goal of economic empowerment.

The use of technology, such as training through Zoom Meetings and creating business profile videos, is an innovative step to expand the reach and increase the program's effectiveness. This allows KPM to get training and business promotion more efficiently. Overall, the PENA Program is one of the government's real efforts to improve the community's economic welfare through business empowerment and skill development. This program is a successful example of how government intervention can support the community's economic independence in a sustainable manner.

PKH in Poncokusumo Village also received support through assistance carried out by the village government and PKH assistants in forming KUBE (Joint Business Group). This KUBE serves as a forum for KPM to learn and develop from each other. Although it is still in its early stages, the enthusiasm of the community and the support from the village government are the main driving factors for the success of this program.

However, challenges in terms of marketing and production are still obstacles that need to be solved to increase the effectiveness of KUBE. The establishment of KUBE is a positive step in encouraging the community's economic independence, although further efforts are needed to overcome obstacles in management and marketing. In accordance with social entrepreneurship theory, entrepreneurship can be used as a tool to achieve social and economic goals (Indarto et al., 2020). This shows that the existence of KUBE has great potential in empowering the community while improving their welfare through an entrepreneurial approach.



Figure 3. KUBE Poncokusumo Cake and Various Snack Production Activities

Based on this research, the economic empowerment program in Poncokusumo Village provides a comprehensive overview of the various programs implemented. Programs such as entrepreneurship training, East Java Puspa, the PENA Program, and KUBE show the commitment of the companions, village governments, social ministries, and related agencies in improving the welfare and independence of the community through various approaches, including training, business assistance, and technology support.

Community involvement in every stage of activities is an important factor that strengthens their participation and understanding of these programs. In addition, the collaboration between the government, PKH assistants, and the community is the main key to success in the implementation of these programs. Despite some challenges, especially related to marketing and production, the results of interviews and observations show that efforts to establish KUBE are a positive step to increase the community's economic independence.

Persuasive Mentoring Activities as an Effort to Increase the Independent Graduation Rate of Family Hope Program Participants in Poverty Reduction

Persuasive assistance is one of the important efforts to increase the independent graduation rate of Family Hope Program (PKH) participants in Poncokusumo Village as part of poverty reduction efforts. Community empowerment assistance is the main strategy to develop a sustainable and inclusive village economy, enabling village communities to obtain greater economic benefits and improve their quality of life (Elshaer et al., 2021). In the context of poverty alleviation, this mentoring approach provides assistance, guidance, and support to people in poor conditions, aiming to improve welfare and reduce poverty levels. Mentoring activities in community empowerment are carried out through several methods, such as training and assistance in managing businesses (Putrie et al., 2024).

This approach involves collaboration between governments, non-governmental organizations, and local communities in providing resources, training, and guidance to needy individuals or groups. This assistance focuses on providing material assistance and empowering communities to identify and solve their own problems by utilizing existing resources (Tyagi, 2023). This aims to build community capacity in sustainably overcoming poverty challenges. Community empowerment itself includes efforts to improve the community's ability and independence to play an active role in development in their region (Purwanti et al., 2023).

The assistance provided by PKH companions in Poncokusumo Village prioritizes a humanist and persuasive approach. This approach aims to maximize program objectives and encourage the independence and welfare of KPM. This, in turn, is expected to encourage KPM to conduct an independent graduation. One of the important aspects of community empowerment is the economy, because a good economy can improve the community's quality of life and open up opportunities for welfare and prosperity (Irawan et al., 2023).

The assistance carried out by PKH Poncokusumo Village facilitators also applies several strategies, including: (1) the application of humanistic learning theory, (2) the use of participatory techniques, (3) the application of learning strategies for adults, and (4) the use of non-formal-informal learning approaches. Mentoring in Poncokusumo Village is carried out with great attention to human beings or humanistic nature, namely by recognizing each individual's uniqueness, developing their potential, and creating a learning environment that supports personal growth. The facilitator also sees that each participant has different needs, learning styles, and backgrounds, so that in the training, they give individual attention to each participant, understand their needs, and adjust the material and learning methods.

Companions also use participatory techniques, which allow people to be directly involved in decision-making that affects their lives. This helps them feel in control and increases a sense of responsibility for the results. In group meetings, for example, the facilitator asked for the KPM's opinion on the plan for entrepreneurship training activities to be carried out, starting from the selection of the type of training, preparation of materials, financing, to the place and time of the training.

Mentoring activities also include a non-formal-informal approach, which is shown by flexibility of time and place, appreciation for KPM experiences, and problem-based learning. This approach creates an inclusive, responsive, and relevant learning environment to the community's needs. It helps increase participants' participation, engagement, and empowerment in learning and community building

(O'Meara & Jaeger, 2019).

Overall, the holistic and responsive approach to community empowerment undertaken by the facilitators in Poncokusumo Village reflects a strong commitment to paying attention to the needs of participants and creating a learning environment that supports community empowerment. The humanistic, participatory, and adult-based approach to learning and the use of non-formal and informal learning engage participants in interactive, relevant, and meaningful activities.

Empowerment at KPM PKH is a form of KPM's readiness to carry out independent graduation.

The study's results on the empowerment of KPM PKH graduates in Poncokusumo show that one of the most prominent factors is the motivation of KPM to live independently, which is driven by their belief in the destiny of sustenance according to religious views. MOE shows an attitude of trust and trust in God as the giver of sustenance, which is the main motivator for them to make decisions regarding graduation. In addition, there is also material and social progress achieved by KPM after graduation, where they have succeeded in building businesses, such as grocery stores and businesses in the agricultural sector, and have stable households with basic needs met. KPM is also actively involved in community activities and local politics. This shows that graduation from PKH is not just a cessation of aid, but rather the achievement of sustainable self-reliance and a positive contribution to their community. Mentoring and motivation to build confidence and self-esteem in the community are important factors that increase KPM's awareness and desire to graduate. This can be seen from their participation in social, cultural, and political activities and in wise family planning related to children's education. This empowerment process involves the active participation of the community in solving problems, so that they can take control of their own lives (Agdal et al., 2019). Overall, the findings in this study provide a clear picture of KPM PKH Poncokusumo's journey towards self-reliance, which is supported by spiritual beliefs, hard work, and strong integration within their local communities.

Discussion

This paper analyzes the economic empowerment program as a continuation of the post-graduation of KPM PKH in Poncokusumo Village. This program aims to encourage KPM to be entrepreneurial or develop existing businesses with the support of capital assistance in the form of business tools and materials, as well as assistance from PKH assistants and related parties. The KUBE program, which is a group, requires extra cooperation between members, but the study results show that KUBE

in Poncokusumo is not optimal. The approaches PKH facilitators took in Poncokusumo, such as persuasive, humanistic, participatory, and non-formal education assistance, have proven effective in increasing independent graduation and reducing poverty.

The form of empowerment of KPM PKH Poncokusumo includes improving the quality of life in various aspects, such as basic needs, security, social relationships, self-esteem, and self-actualization. This success shows the positive impact of the empowerment programs, such as the ability of KPM to meet basic needs, maintain harmonious social relations, and play an active role in society.

Findings from community service in Poncokusumo Village show that the integrative approach in the economic empowerment of PKH Beneficiary Families (KPM) significantly contributes to increasing independence and graduation rates. These results align with research conducted by Prabowo et al. (2021), which emphasizes the importance of active involvement of beneficiaries in each stage of the empowerment program to create a sense of ownership and responsibility for the program's sustainability. Similar things were also found in the service carried out by Rizki & Wahdah (2022) in Sleman Regency, which showed that locally based entrepreneurship training with a participatory approach could significantly increase community business capacity. At Poncokusumo, the involvement of KPM in the planning process to training evaluation has been proven to increase their confidence and readiness in managing their business independently.

Complementarity programs such as entrepreneurship training, East Java Puspa, PENA, and the establishment of KUBE are important parts of PKH's post-graduation sustainability strategy. The Theory of Local Economic Development (Rohman et al., 2023), which emphasizes the use of local resources and multi-stakeholder partnerships, is a strong conceptual foundation for the success of this program. For example, training in making pastries and household products improves KPM skills and creates new economic opportunities based on the local potential of the village. This shows that the proper use of local resources, combined with technical support from the village government and CSR, can strengthen the community's economic structure from below.

Compared to previous services in several other areas, strengthening community capacity in Poncokusumo also shows more comprehensive results because the mentoring approach used is humanistic and participatory. Unlike the top-down approach still found in similar programs, the PKH companion approach in Poncokusumo provides more space for KPM to voice their needs and design

appropriate solutions. The theory of adult education (Andragogy), as described by Matriano (2020), emphasizes the importance of treating trainees as active and experiential learning subjects. This approach has been proven to be applied consistently in the mentoring program at Poncokusumo, which makes learning take place in a contextual, relevant, and tangible way in the daily life of KPM.

In addition, these findings also strengthen the empowerment theory of (Suryanti et al., 2024), which emphasizes three main aspects, namely control over life, decision-making, and involvement in the community. KPM in Poncokusumo not only experienced an increase in income, but also showed wider social involvement, including in local community and political activities. This shows that successful economic empowerment is not only measured by economic indicators alone, but also by how far people are able to actualize themselves in social and social life.

4. CONCLUSION

The post-graduation economic empowerment program in Poncokusumo Village through the Family Hope Program (PKH) has succeeded in increasing the rate of independent graduation and reducing poverty. The intensive assistance carried out has proven to be effective in strengthening the participants' psychological, social, and economic aspects. With a personalized approach, active participation of participants, as well as relevant materials and flexibility, this program successfully empowers participants towards financial independence. The success of this program can be seen from the significant progress of the participants in various aspects of life, which improves their quality of life and their readiness to live independently.

However, this service still has several weaknesses, including limitations in strengthening marketing aspects and post-graduation business sustainability, and the lack of support for digital business promotion infrastructure. Overall, PKH in Poncokusumo Village is effective in empowering participants and has a positive impact on sustainable poverty alleviation. Thus, the results of service in Poncokusumo Village contribute to strengthening a sustainable and holistic empowerment model. These findings strengthen the results of previous studies and provide a new dimension in the development of locally-based mentoring strategies relevant to the community's real needs. The success of this approach can be a reference in designing policies to accelerate KPM PKH independent graduation in other regions, especially in the context of community-based poverty alleviation.

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