

Community-Driven Development, Collective Action and Empowerment: Effective Communication Matters (A Lesson from the KDP and the UPP in Indonesia)

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Abstract

Community-driven development (CDD) has become the most important strategy of the World Bank's development assistance for poverty alleviation. It supported propositions that more Participatory element in community-driven development would allow development process more inclusive to poor people, enhancing social cohesion based on trust and social capital and bring about collective action that considered necessary to solve poverty problem. This paper attempts to explore the impacts of CDD to collective action and empowerment particularly in the context of *Kecamatan* Development Program (KDP) and Urban Poverty Project (UPP). Drawing literature study as supporting evidence, it argues that collective action and empowerment emerged from the KDP and the UPP has not achieved the substantial level to address poverty problem because there are inherent problems in the participatory development design and various social challenges. This paper, therefore, suggests that effective communication is needed in community development as it will enhance the community ownership feeling to the development rather than considering themselves as solely the beneficiaries of the community development process

Keywords: Community-driven Development, Collective Action, Empowerment, Effective Communication, KDP, UPP

Introduction

Community-driven development (CDD) is the ultimate strategy of the World Bank for channeling development assistance. CDD refers to development projects featured by the increasing role of communities in controlling development project from planning, implementing and allocating the resources for their own beneficial (World Bank a). The development assistance based on CDD has been implemented in a wide variety of countries in all regions in the world (World Bank b). The largest and the most influential implementation of CDD is *Program Pembangunan Kecamatan (PPK)* or the Kecamatan (sub-district) Development project (KDP) and *Proyek Penanggulangan*

Kemiskinan Perkotaan (P2KP) or the Urban Poverty Project (UPP) in Indonesia in the post economic crisis 1997.

The potential gain of CDD is supported by two important propositions. First, Participatory element in community-driven development would allow development process more inclusive to poor people, enhancing social cohesion based on trust and social capital, and bring about collective action (Dasgupta & Beard, 2007). Second, by moving the locus of decision making to local communities, CDD opens deliberative spaces from planning to implementation in which every member of community involve in any debates to make choices and convert those choices into preferred actions and outcomes. In doing

so, CDD would likely enhance the capacity of community to engage in their poverty problem, and more generally empower the community (Gibson & Woolcock, 2008).

The World Bank claims that the KDP and the UPP has been becoming an effective poverty alleviation strategy, promoting good governance on community level in Indonesia (Guggenheim, *et.al.*, 2004). The World Bank's flagship of KDP then replicated in many other countries such as in Philippines, East Timor and Afghanistan.¹ KDP model was also operated in disaster area to deliver aid such as in post tsunami Aceh and post-earthquake in Yogyakarta. Moreover, several donors such as ADB and GTZ (German Agency for Technical Cooperation) also found convenient to work through KDP's model and using it for large-scale disbursement fund (<http://www.adb.org/Documents/Information/Community-Driven-Development/CDD-Country-Brief-INO.pdf>).

The expanded implementation of community-driven development approach needs to be critically scrutinized, particularly on its underpinning propositions of collective action and community empowerment. The article attempts to focus on several questions; does CDD strengthen collective action of the targeted community? Does it lead to community empowerment?

Drawing literature study as supporting evidence, the article argues that collective action and empowerment emerged from the KDP and the UPP has not achieved the substantial level to address poverty problem because there are inherent problems in the participatory development design and various social challenges. The article is organised into three sections. It begins with outlining the theoretical view on community-driven development and its central proposition to answer the problem of collective action and empowerment. The second section of this article explains the application of community-driven development in Indonesia's KDP and UPP. The third section will assess the impact of the KDP and the UPP on community collective action and empowerment.

Community Driven-Development, Collective Action and Empowerment

The idea of participatory development rendered to the influential perspective from Gandhian self reliance (*swadeshi*) and small-scale development and Paulo Freire on the pedagogy of the oppressed. It then followed by the growing literatures that paid closer attention on small scale development that would incorporate the poor to participate in development (Chamber, 1983; Escobar, 1995). The thinking of participatory development also significantly affected by the work of Amartya Sen. Sen argues that participatory development model should alter its focus from material well being-development to capability-development focused. Therefore, the central agenda of development should be focused on people's basic freedom of capability, since poverty is a form of 'unfreedom' characterised by the poor inability to make a choice. From this point, development process to deal with poverty requires capability-enhancing institutions to provide the most important human capabilities of all-the ability to choose. In this regard, top-down perspective is seen both ineffective and disempowering (Sen, 1999).

The immediate obstacle in initiating participatory development is how to build collective action. Mancur Olson pessimistically viewed that 'free rider' problems hinder groups of individual to act in cooperative and coordinative behaviour. It is because the biggest incentive of individual behaviour is to maximize their personal welfare, unless there is coercion to force them to do such collective manner (Olson, 1993). Even though, small groups have lower problem of free rider than bigger groups, the bottom line is to achieve collective action there must a solution to the free rider problems. Other pessimistic views often portrayed as "tragedy of the common" and "prisoner dilemma" also highlighted the problem of individual's self-interest in impeding collective action.²

Challenging Olson's point of view, Elinor Ostrom argued that the world contains multiple types of individuals that willing to initiate reciprocity to achieve the benefits of collective action (Ostrom, 2000). To solve the collective ac-

tion problems, according to Ostrom individuals have to establish an agency to create their own agreements, institutions and management system to achieve collective objectives. However, problems of coordinated action have to deal with problem of group size, social and economic composition, and viability of those built-institutions. This has led to increasing interest on social capital studies to solve collective action problems. Social capital is features of organisation, such as moral obligations, social values (trust), norm and network that will facilitate the coordinated action in the society (Martti Siisiäinen, 2000). Social capital also would build 'bonds' between individuals in the society and become the key resources of a community strength to work for their own improvement (Mansuri & Rao, 2004,8).

Another problem in participatory development is how empowerment should be achieved. Empowerment is defined as a process to enhance individual or group capacity to make options and transform those selective options into preferred action to achieve preferred outcomes (Ginson & Woolcock, 2008, 152). Empowerment underscores the importance of process that courage a marginalised communities perform the ability to choose. This idea pinpoints the importance of local collective organization as a deliberative space or as an arena to formulate preferences outcomes and methods that have to be implemented, based on common shared values. Another feature of empowerment also shown in the capacity of the marginalized groups to undermine the potential exploitation exerted by powerful opposition both come from inside and outside the groups (Gibson & Woolcock, 2008, 154-155).

The growing importance of participatory development thinking affected the World Bank's policy on loan conditionality due to many critiques on corruption effects of top-down model of development of aid disbursement (Rawski, 2006, 921-922). Good governance has since become both of conditionality and objective of the projects funded by World Bank. At this point, the World Bank started to actively engage in reforming and restructuring political institutions in

the borrowing countries.³

The World Bank also began to advocate a policy of responsibilities to lower level of government. It was then implemented through a series of social development programs. CDD is a program under the social development umbrella in which communities have direct control over planning decisions and investment resources (World Bank a). CDD is said as a mechanism to improve efficiency and effectiveness, making development more inclusive, building social capital, empowering the poor that in turn will alleviate the poverty problems.

Participatory element in CDD is perceived as an important part to diminish free rider problem and promoting collective action though rebuilding the social capital of local communities. The participation of the poor in planning and managing the resources of the project will enable the individuals to build 'social bonds' within their community based on networking, shared exchange and trust in such ways to facilitate collective action (Dasgupta & Beard, 2007, 233-234).

The World Bank's *World Development Reports 2000/2001* also acknowledged that empowerment is a key priority of development policy (World Bank c). The inclusion of empowerment in CDD programs presents on the capacity giving to community groups to 'control over planning decisions and investment resources' (World Bank b). Since the decision making is on the hand of community group through deliberative community agency, there will be a deliberative contestation in which empowered the individual and group of communities.

Community-Driven development in Indonesia: the KDP and the UPP

Community-driven development was introduced in Indonesia in 1998, when two major events had devastating effects on the poor; the economic crisis in 1997 and the political and social turmoil in the aftermath of the crisis. The World Bank estimated that the 1997 financial crisis increased the poverty rate from 17.6% in the pre crisis to 23.4% during the financial crisis or estimated more than 10 million people plunged

into poverty (World Bank d). The impact of financial crisis also highlighted the unequal distribution of the benefits of growth-based development. The initiative to reduce poverty in Indonesia based on CDD program is *Kecamatan* (sub-district) Development project (KDP) and the Urban Poverty Project (UPP).⁴ From 1998, KDP has been operated in more than 28,000 rural villages (more than 40% of total villages in Indonesia). KDP has distributed US\$40,000–\$114,000 block grants directly to sub-districts (*Kecamatan*) and then it is allocated to rural villages under the administration area of certain sub-district.⁵

Following the KDP, UPP began in Indonesia in November 1999. The UPP is targeted to urban communities in the area that were worst affected by the economic downturn. The program targets are the *Kelurahan* (urban neighbourhoods, wards) where the level of poverty in the population is above 35%. The UPP has been financed from a World Bank loan of US\$100 million, with counterpart financing of US\$10 million from Indonesia government. Until 2007 it has been implemented in 33 provinces, 249 districts, 834 sub-districts and 7273 *Kelurahan* (<http://www.p2kp.org/aboutdetil.asp?mid=10&catid=4&>).

The KDP is coordinated by Ministry of Home affairs and the UPP is coordinated Ministry of Public Work combined with the World Bank representatives. The procedure of implementation and substantive rule of the program are based on the World Bank regulatory framework. The sub-district (*Kecamatan*) is chosen as targeted geographic area as coordinative line of the rural and urban village development.⁶ The presence of World Bank officials in the targeted area are represented by trained-program facilitators.

The first important step of the projects is socialisation. The project facilitators explained the whole manual guidance of the projects from the requirement to monitoring and accountability of the program. The targeted rural and urban village is required to set up a community-based organisation (*Badan Keswadayaan Masyarakat-BKM*) to receive and administer

the project funds.⁷ The structure of BKM exists at the same level as the rural village (*Desa*) or urban village (*Kelurahan*) but it is a separate structure. The BKM is managed by the community volunteers who are selected from local residents through a democratic process. All key village project design and fund allocation are taken in the BKM meeting. Each BKM will decide the projects from open menu consist of three programmatic options: providing micro credit for small-local business, physical infrastructure construction, and human resources improvement (Sekretariat P2KP, 1999). In addition, the manual guidance also regulates specific implementation mechanism such as using secret ballot for the leader election, public display of the project information, and other important steps. The participatory dimension is showed in open and equal position of each resident in the selecting project leader, planning the project and access to the fund. At this point, the position of program facilitators is very important since they become the information source of the guidance. In overall the residents could decide whatever possible to deal with their poverty problems, as long as it is regulated in the manual guidance.

The World Bank claimed KDP's success in improving infrastructure and access to market, to city, health and education facilities and clean water supply, by funded more than 50,000 infrastructure, economic and social activities around the country. Furthermore, KDP asserts that the projects have reduced the unemployment through short term labor-intensive infrastructure works and small business activities benefited from more than \$US40 million. More importantly, the empowerment goal achieved by the participatory and improvement of local governance (Gugenheim *et al.*, 2004).

Similarly, the UPP also claimed to be succeed in number of important aspects such as infrastructure; improvement of social services; improvement of income through access credit; growth in capital and credit service to community; strengthening capacity of communities for collective action through training of more than 80,000 volunteer cadre in the community organisation; more active participation of women

in decision making process; and increase the responsiveness of local government to need of the poor through cooperation with community organization (World Bank c).

Problems of Collective Action and Empowerment of the KDP and the UPP

The successful early result of the KDP and UPP claimed by the World Bank need to be deeply scrutinize, particularly on the impact of these programs to collective action and empowerment in dealing with poverty problems. There are several problems and challenges that emerge from the KDP and UPP that has its roots on inherent contradiction of participatory development and various social factors.

Relating to social capital and collective action, the contentious problem of the KDP and The UPP is geo-administrative-based targeting. The KDP is implemented on rural village (*Desa*) and the UPP is built around urban village (*Kelurahan*) which is simply drawn from the lowest hierarchy of political administrative in Indonesia. The decision to select the targets based on an assumption that geo-administrative base would ensure the projects implementation remained close to the beneficiaries. It is a simple assumption that associating community always represented by the rural and village (*Desa* and *Kelurahan*). The notion of community always been referred to a culturally and homogenous social system, shown by its internal cohesiveness (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). While rural village and urban village are different in many characteristics, the internal dynamics of each administrative division also shows many different facets. Thus, the 'one size fits all' development programs such as the KDP and the UPP will face variety of challenges to achieve the goals.

More importantly, the geo-administrative-based design, though selected nationally based on poverty level of the area, impedes the exclusive target for poor people. It is because poverty condition and causes of poverty in each village is relatively different. In the rural context, the process to identify the beneficiaries can be easily relied on tangible information since rural resident overtly know each other's property,

social connection, social status and other valuable resources. Research conducted by Dasgupta and Beard (2007) in Kelor Village, Malang Eastern of Java found that considering the rural-agricultural culture, the KDP was usually controlled by local elite, though it was not being captured or corrupted.

To identify the target in urban area also much more complex, since there is no open information about resident's income and property ownership. In urban area, targeting the low income neighbourhood relied on assumption that the poor always live in slum area (Marcus & Asmorowati, 2006). That is why the UPP is easily targeted to urban administration units instead of the poor residents. Marcus and Asmorowati (2006) argued that the fact is echoing "rural bias in urban space" because it uses the same method with the KDP.

Given the fact above, the question is to what extent the projects solve the problems of collective action? In rural area, the sense of community represents by homogeneity, stable social relationship and strong feeling of interdependence due to survival strategies. In this regard, social capital has been relatively existed. To some degree, collaborative action also has become important part of village community. The introduction of the project followed by disbursement of loan and fund, affected the social cohesion of the rural community. The project alters the incentive of collective action, from genuine-interdependence based collective action, into money-based collective action. As found by Santosa, the project often perceived as *proyek bagi-bagi duit* (cash hand out project) from the government to the poor (Santosa, *et.al*, 2005).

There is also problem in defining who should be reckoned as the poor and become the target of the program. Mansuri and Rao (2004, 11) argued that target selection process in the CDD program has serious potential trade off. It is because community may compete with new incentive. Social jealousy often breaks out when some member of community of the village is chosen to become the beneficiaries, while in fact they are not eligible. A research conducted by INFID in Central Sulawesi found that many of the com-

munity members that received loan from micro finance project find difficulties to repay their loan. Ironically, the program increased the gap between the rich and the poor, between the migrant and local native (Dahniar and Daniel Lasimpo, 2008). In this regard, the KDP seems to decrease the social capital. The KDP also reduce the sustainability of collective action because it depends on the fund delivery as its biggest incentive.

In the UPP context, the reality is much more complex. Urban community characterised by heterogeneity, variety of employment and high mobility. The idea of social capital also less visible in urban area since the key to survive depends on diversification of job. Given with such fact, it is not surprising if several researchers found that there are many distortions in the project implementation. Marcus and Asmorowati (2006, p. 156) discovered that participation of the program was only restricted to the *Kelurahan* apparatus-connected resident. They also found that the information controlled by small part of community member. Similarly, an evaluation conducted by Institute for Social and Economic Research, Education and Information (*Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial*-LP3ES) found that in many cases the program were only introduce to limited members of community such as local elites, families, friends or neighbourhood of the Head of *Kelurahan* (cited from Marcus & Asmorowati, 2006). The fact was also acknowledged by the World Bank. In the World Bank midterm-review conducted in 2001, it revealed that only less than 13% of the community respondent knew the program by socialization mechanism (Sekretariat P2KP, 1999). Furthermore, given the social diversity, anonymity and struggle to survive in urban life, as found by Marcus and Asmorowati, the only attractive motivation to members of urban community to engage in collective action is the disbursement of fund (money) and the infrastructures project (Marcus & Asmorowati, 2006, 157).

As shown by empirical research above, the successful result claimed by the World Bank that the KDP and the UPP has been stimulating

social capital and followed by collective action seems at risk. Participation, social capital and collective action often measure by community ability to create community-based organization (BKM), and numbers of people who attended the BKM meeting. Nonetheless, in the real implementation, instead of building social capital, the programs have been potentially ruining the existed social capital. Competition to get the loan from microfinance and infrastructures project has replaced the old notion of interdependence social capital in the rural area. In the urban context, with many differences on the characteristic compared to rural context respectively, it is not the money for loan or infrastructure projects that will bring about social capital and collective action. Community empowerment claimed by The World Bank's also needs to be examined. Participatory and deliberative agency (the BKM) in the process of planning and managing the projects, the KDP and The UPP appear to encourage community empowerment. However, to what extent those are defined as genuinely empower the community.

Despite the fact that the KDP and The UPP have benefited materially to large numbers of Indonesia community (such as training, money for loan and infrastructures), one thing that should be underline is that the World Bank (through its national coordinator and regional facilitator) has become "the government" of the programs (Li, 2006). The World Bank controls the incentive and rule of the game, while deliberative participation of the community was done strictly follow the regulatory framework (manual guidance). For example, the community could not make a project; though it is very important to them, unless it is enlisted in the open menu consist of three programmatic (micro finance, infrastructure and human resources improvement). Even though the programs provide open media to complaint, the community hardly has an opportunity to defy the rule of the game.

More importantly, opinion that the community now has a 'voice' should be understood in particular initiatives that enlisted in the funded projects. The 'voice' on bigger problems related to economic inequality, political education and

social justice were not to be deliberated in the community-based organisation (BKM) domain. As a writer argued that the KDP and the UPP are parts of an anti-politics program influenced by neoliberal perspective that only emphasis on the effectiveness and efficiency of delivering fund (Carroll, 2009). Without engaging social justice as an important part of community development, there will be no genuine empowerment. Thus, empowerment as a means and ends of the community-driven development has not been fully achieved.

Why Does Effective Communication Matter?

As has been discussed above, community development is seen as a new paradigm of development in which the community members hold the power to solve their own problems, with their own wisdom, experience, and resources to eradicate poverty. It also underlines that amongst the most important targets of the development process is the community as human being and not just merely capital accumulation in terms of economic growth. In this light, community development sees development as a way to enhance community knowledge, skills, and promoting their self dignity (Adedokun, 2008). In order to bring about all these objectives, effective communication is a *sine qua non*. Without effective communication there will be misunderstanding and suspicion that would lead to conflict, low level of cooperation, and in turn the failure of community development process. Effective communication is also an important mechanism for the founding and preservation of a better social and working relationship (adekokun, 2008). In the communication process there will be a steady change of interactions and ideas amongst members of community to find solution for their problems. Effective communication therefore enhances participation of community members in achieving the objectives of community development.

An effective communication in community development should be based on two-way communication. It is not only to persuade people

to participate, nor motivate to involve in community development. More than just persuading and motivating, effective communication should be used to facilitate community participation in development process. It also should be based on dialogue process through good media and interpersonal communication. The objectives of the communication process are to build common development goals, implementing a set of activities, and to make a realization of the development plan based of dialogue process. An effective communication should be moving from informing and persuading community members to changing their attitudes and behavior to find the solution of the problems that identified by the community members (Adedokun, Adeyemo and Olorusola, 2010).

Conclusion

The KDP and the UPP have two main simultaneous objectives. They are set out as poverty alleviation strategy as well as promoting good community governance to institute democratic, transparent and accountability practices in community-based development. It is based on World Bank's CDD that adopted the principle of participatory development. The approach claims that the program would strengthen community collective action and community empowerment as a means to solve the poverty problem. The overall achievement of the KDP and the UPP showed a complex picture. Indeed, the programs showed the shift locus of development into local/ community level. They also deliver a large amount of resources efficiently straight forward to the beneficiaries with low level of bureaucratic corruption. In addition, the programs bring the dynamics of planning and managing in the hand of local community for their own beneficial.

Nonetheless, instead of establishing a new social capital by delivering the projects, the KDP and the UPP replace the existing community bonds with a new incentive based on loan and infrastructure project. In the long run, the sustainability of collective action is affected by the availability of incentives. Furthermore, given with different characteristic with rural area respectively, the implementation of the project as

incentive to build social capital in the urban community is proven to be problematic. Similarly, related to community empowerment, the KDP and the UPP showed only a shallow empowerment result. Effective communication, therefore, is needed in community development as it will enhance the community ownership feeling to the development rather than considering themselves as solely the beneficiaries of the community development process.

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