
**Optimizing the Role of the Community in Community Empowerment
Through Out of School Education****Wedi Fitriana***STKIP Siliwangi Bandung*

wedi@stkipsiliwangi.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Society is a social group that also has enormous potential if it can direct its ability to develop various competencies that can provide added value in their lives. The problem is the role of the community, often because of ignorance of the problems of their own lives. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a series of out-of-school education programs that are far more comprehensive in order to build public awareness to be involved in a far more optimal process of community empowerment.

Keyword: *community role, community empowerment, out of school education*

Preliminary

Indonesia is one country with enormous wealth. Even in various fields, Indonesia has enormous potential, such as fisheries which are allegedly capable of producing 3000 trillion rupiahs and can only be utilized for 291.8 trillion rupiahs, up to uranium reserves in Indonesia, which reach 70,000 tons. At the end of the change of leadership of this country, it was revealed that the level of economic progress in Indonesia reached a considerable range. The main problem is that utilization is not optimal, because of the minimal carrying capacity. Utilization of various assets owned by Indonesia, not because of mere incompetence. But because of the wrong perception factor about utilizing social potential, as well as natural potential. The existing perception is limited to the use of natural resources by using raw materials to be directly used as a life support tool. Not in an effort to improve its condition, then use it. Naturally, if the value of Indonesian exports is very small, because the form of goods exported is raw goods, it is not finished goods.

People often fantasize about something beautiful and good, which is still beyond the reach of their abilities. In such a society, the majority of the population cannot interact positively with their environment, and quite the opposite, sometimes their lives depend on the environment. Society is always an object and not the subject of community development. The courageous attitude to face life rarely develops, because the perception of life itself is also different, not in efforts to improve the quality of life, but only to accept how life works. The tendency that often occurs is the attitude of escaping from the problems faced in his life. This actually aggravates the level of disparity in social life in the community.

Community life is characterized by high levels of education, income, health, employment opportunities, and awareness of the environment. In short, it can be argued that pseudo life situations exist in societies that are still lagging behind in a low socio-economic

level, not a justification, but an overview of the current context of people's lives, amidst various economic, social and cultural strikes who enter through various communication channels. Whereas the planning society, according to Graham & Hogg (1995), is a society that is very responsive to the changes that are taking place and to the possibilities of changes that will occur in the future. Most of the community members are able to think creatively, be innovative, and have strong responsibilities to realize community welfare. Thus, they are able to develop various personal potentials and utilize various environmental potentials around them. This makes them able to build a quality of life that is far better and on par with other communities that have already advanced.

In principle, community members must have a plan that is based on high awareness of the environment and the development of the community, nation and country. They have the ability to learn to solve problems and innovate in supporting the progress of social and ecological life around them. This can be built when scientific and open attitudes, rational thoughts and actions, tolerance for differences in views and background in life, and focusing on humanity color the behavior of most citizens, have been well formed. With high solidarity they participate in planning, implementing, assessing development policies and programs related to efforts to meet the needs of the community, nation and country. In this context, community empowerment is an important part of the development of the nation and state, including efforts to make people aware of the forms of life they must explore in order to improve the quality of life that is far better.

Discussion

The process of transformation or social change that is now often called globalization does not only change human life, but also changes trends in education and learning (Tilaar, 1997). It is recognized that there will be fundamental changes in education and learning. Education must function doubly, namely to foster humanity through the development of all human persons, and the development of human resources to enter a new life. The longer work and learning become a unity of the lifelong education frame. Because knowledge advances and increases exponentially, so that in order to do a good job, one must increase his knowledge through continuing education. The challenges and demands for continuous learning are increasingly strong, education and learning are essentially life itself. Therefore learning outside of school and outside the university has increasingly important role. In the past, schools and universities became the main center or even the only center of learning activities. At present, workplaces, community environments, and various other social places have gradually become the center of new learning activities, the workplace has become an important place of learning. Even in other life frameworks, people are urged to be able to teach themselves, before finally being able to teach others. This is the main core in the lifelong learning process.

In a publication published by UNESCO, it stated that, "Non formal education is organized and sustained educational activities that correspond exactly to the definition of formal education. Non formal education may therefore take place both within and outside educational institutions, and cater to persons of all ages. Depending on country context, it may cover educational programs to import adult literacy, basic education for out of school children, lifeskills, work skills, general culture. Non-formal education do not program programs follow the "ladder" system, and may have differed durations and

certification of learning achieved "(UNESCO, 1997). This explains that the learning process is not solely because of the need for credential signs (diplomas, certificates and so on), but because of the demands and challenges of life itself. The general problem is when people, in fact, cannot understand what learning is, how they learn, and what can be changed in their lives, through the learning process. If this answer cannot be developed in people's lives in general, it is very possible that they can only answer that learning is an educational process that runs in the community. And there are no implications at all for the life they are currently living.

Various countries that are undergoing a development process (developing countries) are experiencing obstacles where the formal school system does not have the capacity to handle all children and adolescents or children cannot benefit from the system, especially because formal schools, limited constraints, input that can be received in the educational process in it. Parents and children as well as teachers with education authorities tend to find the fastest solution from the formal education process to replace the stunted schooling process. Various out-of-school education programs provide access for young people and children to non-formal and informal learning, which serves to strengthen self-esteem and help them find ways to contribute to their communities. In some cases, this activity may also serve as a bridge to help children and youth improve their academic skills directly and in the end, they will gain recognition of their skills, as well as those who have completed their formal education.

Various educational activities outside of school can take the form of literacy programs, cultural activities such as music, dance or drama, sports activities programs, popular education and various contexts, non-formal education also includes accelerated learning programs aimed at making children and young people experiencing obstacles in the formal education program, can be facilitated to be able to catch up.

Out-of-school education can also be used as an important supplement for students enrolled in formal schools. In some of the more precarious situations, formal school curricula often cover only core subjects or only a few important topics to be able to survive in a new environment. Short school times in the majority of emergency situations make it difficult to add more subjects to the curriculum. As an alternative that can be achieved by some students to get extra curricular activities in non-formal learning activities. In conflict situations, or after natural disasters, non-formal education activities may be needed to focus more on specific subjects, such as environmental education, natural care, peace education and conflict resolution, health production, hygiene, prevention of disease or epidemics, HIV awareness and prevention / AIDS, psychological concerns, and human rights. Outside school education provides opportunities for students to be able to develop understanding and awareness about the implications of life itself. This is what will help them to find character in the world of education, not just limited to the achievement of certain competencies that are very likely far from what they expect in real life in the community.

One challenge in today's community life is that technology is increasingly advanced and more widely used in society, routine work is increasingly scarce, while non-routine jobs require high qualifications. Now, formal education is increasingly easy to reach by everyone, so that social mobility is getting higher and faster. The greater the equal rights to learning opportunities available to anyone who wants to advance and the more

attention the government gives to the role of talent, the more talent and maturity that will be generated to meet the demands of work in all walks of life. Modern society is also characterized by change and high mobility, and the most prominent is population mobility as a result of high economic and technological rationalization. The development of the horizons of individual experiences is broadening with the support of mass media, so that now anyone can touch and get to know international languages that cause people to travel more than their parents and ancestors used to.

Outside school education provides an expansion of access to all levels of society to be able to develop their abilities and creative power to build a broader framework in improving the quality of their lives. Various reviews, as previously revealed, indicate that it is necessary to optimize the role of outside school education in community empowerment. Freire (1984) states that awareness is the main fundamentals in building the true character of society. Where they can access and utilize a variety of learning opportunities that exist, so that they can improve the quality of life in real terms. Not just accepting what is and closing themselves to various facts that they should have criticized or which they should correct. Improving the quality of life rests on the ability of the community itself to improve and develop its various potentials, so that they can build a structured system in order to improve the quality of life.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above it can be concluded the following matters.

1. Non-Formal Education (PNF) or PLS plays a role in improving education which concerns the expansion of education services through various programs and out-of-school education units that provide opportunities for the community to be able to manage, utilize and maintain the quality of life of the community itself.
2. Education outside of school must be developed based on the needs of the community in the midst of the various challenges that exist, thereby being able to expand people's access to improving the quality of life better.

Reference

- Freire, P. (1984). *Pengembangan Sumber Daya Manusia dalam Era Globalisasi*. Massachussets: Centre for International Education University of Massachussets.
- Graham, V., & Hogg, M. (1995). *Introduction to Social Psycholog*. New York : Parentice Hall.
- Tilaar, H. (1997). *Pengembangan Sumber Daya Manusia dalam Era Globalisasi*. Jakarta: Grasindo.