


Empowerment of KUBE Based on Regions in the South Coastal Area of Pelabuhan Ratu Sukabumi

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Empowerment, Joint Business Group (KUBE), Region, Coastal Community, Pelabuhan Ratu	Empowerment of regional-based Joint Business Groups (KUBE) in the southern coastal area of Pelabuhan Ratu, Sukabumi, is a strategy to improve community welfare through strengthening community-based economics. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of KUBE empowerment in increasing the economic and social capacity of coastal communities, as well as identifying supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation. The research method used is a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through interviews, observations, and documentation studies. The results of the study show that regional-based KUBE empowerment in Palabuhanratu has a positive impact on improving the welfare of coastal communities. This program has succeeded in increasing fishermen's productivity through modernization of fishing gear and more efficient fisheries cultivation. In addition, business diversification such as seafood processing and marine tourism development has opened up new economic opportunities for local communities. Support in the form of business management training, access to capital, and digital marketing has also been proven to increase the competitiveness of KUBE products in the wider market. With the synergy between the community, government, and private sector, KUBE can develop independently and sustainably, while supporting regional economic growth based on local resources.
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INTRODUCTION

Poverty in a country is a serious problem that has a wide impact on people's welfare, especially in meeting daily needs (Ras, 2013). In Indonesia, poverty is often caused by high unemployment rates, which makes it difficult for many individuals and families to earn a decent income. Prolonged unemployment not only hinders access to basic needs such as food, education, and health, but also worsens social inequality and slows economic growth (Istan, 2017). In addition, the low level of education and skills of the workforce further exacerbates this condition, because many people are unable to compete in the job market (Nindatu, 2019).

The government's attention to poverty alleviation in the reform era has increased, especially after the economic crisis that hit Indonesia in mid-1997. The crisis caused a spike in poverty rates due to weakening people's purchasing power, increasing unemployment, and declining industrial and small and medium-sized business sectors (Herlina & Komariah,

2017). In response, the government began to design various more structured social policies and programs, such as Direct Cash Assistance (BLT), the Family Hope Program (PKH), and strengthening the micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) sector to help people escape poverty (Papilaya, 2020). In addition, investment in education and job training is also being encouraged to improve the skills of the workforce to be more competitive in the job market. This economic and social policy reform reflects the government's commitment to creating more equitable welfare, reducing social disparities, and encouraging inclusive economic growth (Swandriano & Arif, 2023).

So far, planning, targeting, and poverty criteria in poverty alleviation programs run by the government and related agencies have still been centralized (top-down). This approach often does not take into account the specific needs of a particular community or region, so that the programs designed are less effective in directly addressing poverty problems (Junainah et al., 2016). As a result, communities are more often positioned as objects receiving benefits rather than as active subjects in self-empowerment efforts. This causes low community participation in exploring their potential or utilizing resources in the surrounding environment to improve their welfare. In addition, the lack of community involvement in the planning and implementation process of the program also makes the program run unsustainable and less able to create significant long-term changes (Soesanta, 2013).

In addition, poverty alleviation programs implemented by the government are often sectoral, where each ministry or agency has its own policies without clear coordination. This creates sectoral egos, where each party focuses more on its own interests, resulting in overlapping programs (Huraerah, 2013). Furthermore, each agency also has a different definition and criteria for poverty, causing different perspectives in dealing with this problem. As a result, poverty tends to be understood partially, and the steps to overcome it are fragmented. The difficulty in maintaining program continuity is further exacerbated by the tendency to continue to create new programs without continuity from previous programs (Rogahang et al., 2023). This makes poverty alleviation efforts less effective and does not provide a sustainable impact on people in need. Therefore, a more integrated approach is needed, based on community participation, and better coordination between agencies so that poverty alleviation programs can run more optimally and on target (Triani et al., 2020).

One solution to overcome these problems is to implement a regional-based Joint Business Group (KUBE) program, which focuses more on empowering the community's economy independently and sustainably (Wediawati & Setiawati, 2015). Unlike the top-down approach which tends to be instructive, the KUBE program encourages the community to actively participate in determining the type of business that suits the potential of their region. By being regionally based, this program allows for adaptation to local social, economic, and cultural conditions, so that it is more targeted and has a higher chance of sustainability. In addition, KUBE also provides opportunities for the community to build economic independence through strengthening business capacity, access to capital, and ongoing assistance from the government and the private sector (Lubis et al., 2022).

In its implementation, the regional-based KUBE program can be focused on superior regional sectors, such as fisheries, agriculture, or creative industries, which are the main resources of the local community. The government acts as a facilitator that helps in providing skills training, market access, and ease of business licensing, so that the formed business groups can develop optimally (Ani'im et al., 2021). Thus, this program not only provides a short-term solution in reducing poverty rates, but also creates a more inclusive and competitive economic ecosystem. The synergy between the government, business world, and society in regional-based KUBE is expected to be a more effective and sustainable economic empowerment model in efforts to alleviate poverty in Indonesia (Heryadi et al., 2022).

In this study, the researcher chose a location in the South Coastal Area of Pelabuhan Ratu, Sukabumi, which geographically has great potential in the fisheries, tourism, and marine-based creative industry sectors. The selection of this location is based on the consideration that coastal communities still face various challenges in improving economic welfare, such as limited access to capital, low levels of business skills, and minimal supporting infrastructure. Therefore, this study will examine the implementation of the regional-based Joint Business Group (KUBE) program as a coastal community empowerment strategy. With a regional-based approach, the KUBE program is expected to be able to optimize local economic potential, increase community independence, and create a more effective and sustainable empowerment model in efforts to alleviate poverty in the coastal area of Pelabuhan Ratu.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, which aims to understand in depth the implementation of regional-based Joint Business Groups (KUBE) in community empowerment efforts in the South Coastal Area of Pelabuhan Ratu, Sukabumi. The data used in this study consisted of primary data and secondary data (Moleong, 2014). Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with stakeholders, such as KUBE members, local government officials, and local community leaders. In addition, field observations were conducted to directly observe the socio-economic conditions of the community and the implementation of the KUBE program at the research location. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from various sources, such as government reports, academic studies, and official documents related to coastal community economic empowerment programs. The data collected was then analyzed using qualitative analysis techniques, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions, in accordance with the Miles and Huberman analysis model. With this method, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of the KUBE program in improving community welfare and formulating more optimal and sustainable empowerment strategies in the coastal area of Pelabuhan Ratu.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Joint Business Group (KUBE) is one of the community empowerment models developed as an integrated poverty alleviation effort. Since its introduction in 1982 by the Ministry of Social Affairs (formerly the Department of Social Affairs), KUBE has become part of the national strategy in improving the welfare of the poor through a group-based economic approach. This program began with the Integrated Poverty Alleviation Movement (Gerdu Taskin) policy which aims to provide economic access for the underprivileged by forming joint business groups consisting of 10 heads of families. However, the empowerment patterns applied so far tend to be uniform and have not fully considered the potential and local needs in each region. This causes the effectiveness of the program to often vary in different regions, depending on the relevance of the efforts given to the socio-economic conditions of the local community.

In its implementation, the assistance provided to the KUBE group is not in the form of cash, but in the form of business packages provided by third parties. This package can be in the form of workshop equipment, cattle, agricultural equipment, and other forms of business that are considered appropriate to improve the group's economy. Before receiving assistance, KUBE members first receive business skills training as a form of preparation in managing the assistance provided. This approach aims to ensure that communities have sufficient capacity to run businesses independently and sustainably. However, the main challenge in implementing this program is the suitability between the type of assistance and the interests and economic potential in each region. Therefore, to increase the effectiveness of KUBE as a community empowerment model, a more flexible and regional-based strategy is needed so that this program is truly able to encourage economic independence and reduce poverty rates significantly.

The Joint Business Group (KUBE) program is designed to improve the social welfare of poor communities by providing sustainable economic and social support. The main objective of this program is to help underprivileged community groups to meet their basic daily needs, increase family income, expand access to education, and improve their health standards. With this program, it is hoped that the community will not only gain short-term economic benefits, but can also improve their overall quality of life. In addition, KUBE encourages the creation of a sustainable group-based economic system, where each member has the opportunity to develop independently and is able to manage the resources they have more effectively and productively.

More than just the economic aspect, the KUBE approach also aims to build harmonious social dynamics within community groups. This program instills the values of togetherness, social solidarity, and increases creativity in finding solutions to the economic problems faced. In addition, KUBE encourages the emergence of an attitude of independence, self-confidence, and a willingness to actively participate in local economic development. By prioritizing the spirit of mutual cooperation and social responsibility, KUBE members are expected to not only be able to improve the welfare of themselves and their families, but also contribute to wider community development. Therefore, the success of this program is

highly dependent on the synergy between the government, communities, and other stakeholders in creating an inclusive and sustainable empowerment ecosystem.

Each group in the Joint Business Group (KUBE) receives a business assistance package designed to improve their economic welfare. However, for groups that demonstrate success and good performance, the government provides the opportunity to receive business development assistance at the next stage. This system not only aims to provide economic support, but also to encourage healthy competition and motivation in managing businesses sustainably. One of the main principles in this program is the principle of rolling aid, where groups that have received benefits are required to reallocate some of the aid to other poor groups around them. In this way, the impact of the program becomes wider and its benefits can be felt by more people in need.

The success of the KUBE program is measured through 10 main indicators developed by the Ministry of Social Affairs (Kemensos) since 1994. The first and second indicators relate to the development of productive economic enterprises, both at the family and group levels. The third indicator assesses the overall social welfare conditions of the Social Assistance Family (KBS). In addition, the sustainability of the program is also seen from participation in Mandatory Social Contributions (SSW), Social Welfare Contributions (IKS), and mutual cooperation practices carried out in groups. Other indicators include the development of group cooperatives, the implementation of social welfare guarantees through social organizations, and the growth of group savings and investments. The social aspect is also a concern in this program, with an emphasis on KBS's participation in family planning programs, integrated health posts, and compulsory education, as well as participation in Karang Taruna as a forum for youth development. With this approach, KUBE not only plays a role in economic empowerment, but also in sustainable social development, creating a more independent and prosperous society.

Palabuhanratu Bay is one of the coastal areas that has high economic and ecological potential in Sukabumi Regency. Physically, this region has a varied morphology, ranging from lowlands to hills and mountains. These geographical characteristics make coastal areas very vulnerable to the impacts of upstream activities, such as erosion, sedimentation and water pollution. Mistakes in environmental management in hilly areas can quickly affect coastal and marine ecosystems, so a sustainable and ecosystem-based governance approach is needed. In addition, this coastal area has a diverse ecosystem, including beaches, river estuaries, and near-shore waters, which can be optimally utilized to support the welfare of local communities.

Administratively, the Palabuhanratu Bay Coastal area consists of four sub-districts, namely Cisolok Sub-district, Cikakak Sub-district, Palabuhanratu Sub-district, and Simpenan Sub-district. Each sub-district has different characteristics and natural resource potentials. This coastal area stretches for ± 200 km along the southern coast of West Java, directly bordering the Indian Ocean, so it has abundant marine resources. The main potential of this area includes biological resources, such as fisheries, coastal ecosystems, and other marine biota. In addition, there are also non-biological resources, such as sea sand and mining

materials, as well as environmental services that can be utilized in the tourism and conservation sectors.

Despite having great potential, utilization and development in this southern coastal area is not yet optimal. Many economic sectors are still underdeveloped, although there is great potential in tourism and marine cultivation. The natural beauty of Palabuhanratu Bay could actually be a more competitive marine tourism attraction if it is managed well. In addition, the fisheries and marine cultivation sectors also have the potential to be further developed to improve the welfare of coastal communities. However, in its utilization, it is necessary to pay attention to environmental carrying capacity so as not to damage valuable coastal ecosystems.

In the context of community empowerment, a region-based approach is very important to ensure the sustainability of economic programs on the coast of Palabuhanratu Bay. One strategy that can be implemented is through Joint Business Groups (KUBE), which aims to improve the economic welfare of the community while maintaining environmental sustainability. By implementing regional-based programs involving local communities, it is hoped that the coastal potential of Palabuhanratu can be developed optimally, creating new jobs, and improving community welfare without sacrificing the sustainability of the marine ecosystem.

Coastal communities generally still maintain traditional lifestyles, including in the development of skills that are passed down from generation to generation. The geographical conditions that are directly adjacent to the waters make the majority of the population dependent on the fisheries sector as their main livelihood. Based on interviews with local fishermen group leaders, the skills possessed by coastal communities still rely heavily on old methods passed down from generation to generation. For example, in fishing activities, fishermen still use rowing boats and fishing techniques that rely on wind direction and ocean currents. This shows that although traditional methods have local wisdom value, this approach is still less efficient in facing changing times and modern economic challenges. In addition, in processing the catch, people still use old techniques such as smoking fish as the main preservation method.

To improve the welfare and competitiveness of coastal communities, innovation-based empowerment efforts are needed, both in fishing methods and marine product processing. One approach that can be applied is the modernization of fisheries cultivation techniques, for example by sowing fish and shrimp seeds without full dependence on additional feed, which can reduce operational costs for fishermen. In addition, the community also needs to be introduced to more efficient fishing technologies, such as the use of environmentally friendly fishing gear that can increase catches without damaging the marine ecosystem. In processing the catch, innovations such as modern packaging technology and diversification of processed fish products can increase the selling value of fishery products. With the right empowerment program, it is hoped that coastal communities can adapt to the times, improve economic welfare, and maintain the sustainability of the coastal environment.

An official from the Sukabumi Regency Fisheries Service emphasized that the success of community empowerment is highly dependent on active support from the government.

The government has an important role in providing facilities, training and assistance for coastal communities so that they can improve their skills and economic welfare. This support can take the form of assistance with modern fishing gear, training in more efficient fisheries cultivation techniques, and funding for the development of marine-based businesses. In addition, collaboration between the government, educational institutions and the private sector can also accelerate the transformation of coastal communities from traditional methods to more innovative and sustainable practices. With the right attention and policies, coastal community empowerment can run more optimally, so that it not only improves the standard of living of fishermen but also contributes to the overall economic development of the region.

Empowerment of Joint Business Groups (KUBE) based on regions in the southern region of Palabuhanratu can be implemented with an approach that adapts to local potential, socio-economic characteristics, and the needs of the local community. Here are some forms of empowerment that can be implemented:

1. Development of KUBE Fisheries and Marine Cultivation

The majority of coastal communities in Palabuhanratu depend on the fisheries sector for their livelihood, both through capture fisheries activities and marine cultivation. Therefore, empowerment of Joint Business Groups (KUBE) needs to be focused on increasing the efficiency and productivity of this sector. One step that can be taken is to modernize environmentally friendly fishing gear, so that fishermen can increase their catch without damaging the marine ecosystem. In addition, skills training in more innovative fish and shrimp cultivation techniques needs to be provided so that communities do not only depend on the catch, but can also develop sustainable fisheries businesses. Business capital assistance and banking access also need to be strengthened so that fishing groups are able to develop their businesses with adequate financial support.

In addition to technical aspects, the development of capture fisheries and marine cultivation in Palabuhanratu must also consider environmental sustainability aspects. One model that can be applied is an environmentally friendly cultivation system, such as floating net cages and integrated ponds, which allow fisheries management to be carried out efficiently while maintaining the balance of the marine ecosystem. This program can also be integrated with an ecotourism approach, where tourists can be invited to see the fish farming process directly or even participate in sustainable fisheries activities. With the synergy between fisheries modernization and environmental conservation, KUBE empowerment in this sector will not only improve the welfare of coastal communities but also ensure the availability of fisheries resources for future generations .

2. Diversification of Local Resource Based Businesses

In addition to the capture fisheries and marine cultivation sectors, KUBE empowerment can also be focused on marine-based businesses, such as fisheries processing. Various processed products such as smoked fish , dried fish, fish floss, and other seafood products have great potential to improve the welfare of coastal communities in Palabuhanratu. With production management training, modern processing techniques, and food safety standards, KUBE members can improve the quality of their products so that they

are more competitive in local and national markets. In addition, strengthening skills in packaging and branding can help these products have a more attractive appearance and suit consumer tastes, increasing the competitiveness of their businesses.

To support the sustainability of this business, collaboration between the private sector and the government is essential. The government can provide assistance in the form of production equipment, such as drying machines, modern smoking equipment, and packaging facilities, so that the production process is more efficient. Meanwhile, the private sector can play a role in marketing and distribution, helping processed seafood products from Palabuhanratu reach a wider market, including supermarkets, restaurants, and e-commerce. Mentoring programs are also important so that people can understand digital marketing strategies, utilize online platforms to promote their products, and expand business networks with trading partners. With this approach, KUBE is not only a means of economic empowerment for coastal communities but also contributes to the growth of the seafood processing industry in the Palabuhanratu area .

3. Marine Ecotourism and Tourism Service Business

The southern coastal area of Palabuhanratu has unique and diverse natural beauty, so that the development of marine tourism can be a great opportunity in empowering Joint Business Groups (KUBE). One model that can be applied is a community-based homestay business, where local residents provide accommodation for tourists with a concept that emphasizes local wisdom and coastal culture. In addition to providing an authentic experience for tourists, this program can also increase community income in a sustainable way . In addition, the tourist boat rental business and diving tour guide services also have good prospects. With proper training, communities can offer attractive marine tourism packages, such as snorkeling, diving, or marine conservation educational tours.

In addition to the accommodation and marine tourism sectors, coastal culinary businesses also have great potential to be developed. KUBE can manage restaurant or food stall businesses that serve fresh seafood typical of Palabuhanratu, such as grilled fish, processed seafood, to culinary specialties such as sea pais and coastal sambal. To increase the appeal, the community can be given training in culinary arts and culinary business management, as well as support in packaging and marketing processed seafood products so that they can be sold as tourist souvenirs. With the concept of sustainable ecotourism, KUBE empowerment in the tourism sector not only improves the economic welfare of coastal communities, but also contributes to preserving the marine and coastal environment of Palabuhanratu for future generations.

4. Cooperative Strengthening and Capital Access Program

To strengthen the sustainability of KUBE's business, the formation of a fishermen's cooperative or community-based business cooperative is a strategic step that can improve the welfare of group members. This cooperative acts as a forum for collective financial and business management, which includes providing business capital, purchasing modern fishing gear, and procuring more efficient raw materials. With the cooperative, KUBE members can obtain more stable prices and wider access to the market, both for fish catches and processed marine products. In addition, cooperatives can function as providers

of business management and financial management training, so that each member has a better understanding of how to manage their business sustainably.

Apart from institutional aspects, the sustainability of KUBE's business also requires support from the government and financial institutions. Programs such as People's Business Credit (KUR), business capital grants, and partnerships with the private sector can help business groups develop their economic activities without being burdened by difficult access to capital. The government can also provide subsidies for environmentally friendly fishing gear and technological assistance to increase fishermen's productivity and seafood processing. In addition, there needs to be cooperation with digital marketplaces and large distributors so that KUBE products can be marketed to wider areas, including the tourism and export sectors. With a combination of solid cooperatives and adequate financial support, KUBE in the coastal area of Palabuhanratu can develop into an independent and sustainable business, providing a positive economic impact for the local community.

5. Business Management and Digital Marketing Training

In order for KUBE to compete and develop independently, training is needed in business management which includes business planning, financial recording, and marketing strategies. With a good understanding of business management, KUBE members can be more skilled in managing capital, managing production, and setting competitive selling prices. In addition, training in digital marketing is also a key to increasing product reach. Both the government and the private sector can play a role in providing technical guidance on promotional strategies through social media, managing online stores, and optimizing digital content that is attractive to consumers. In this way, KUBE's products can have stronger branding and attract wider market interest.

Utilization of digital technology such as marketplaces, e-commerce, and social media can be an effective strategy in increasing the competitiveness of KUBE products from the Palabuhanratu area. With access to digital platforms, processed fishery products and other marine-based businesses can reach wider markets, both nationally and internationally. In addition, digital-based marketing allows direct interaction with consumers, increases transparency in transactions, and provides opportunities for KUBE to obtain feedback to improve product quality. The government and related institutions can help by providing better internet access in coastal areas and providing assistance in managing online stores. By implementing this strategy, KUBE in Palabuhanratu can be more independent, highly competitive, and able to develop sustainably in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

The regional-based KUBE program in the southern region of Palabuhanratu has great potential in improving the welfare of coastal communities. With the majority of the population working as fishermen, empowerment can be focused on the development of more modern and sustainable capture fisheries and marine cultivation. In addition, business diversification through seafood processing, such as making fish floss, smoking and drying fish, can provide added value to local fishery products. Support in the form of technical training, provision of business capital, and assistance from the government and private

sector are important factors in increasing the productivity and competitiveness of community businesses. In addition to the fisheries sector, the potential for marine tourism in Palabuhanratu can also be utilized as a business opportunity for KUBE, such as community-based homestays, tourist boat rentals, and coastal culinary specialties. To support business sustainability, the formation of fishermen's cooperatives and business communities can help with financial management and marketing. Utilizing digital technology through marketplaces and social media is also an important strategy so that KUBE products can reach a wider market. With a holistic approach, KUBE in Palabuhanratu is not only able to improve community welfare, but also contribute to sustainable local resource-based economic development.

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