



## Empathetic Communication and Social Management Strategies in Increasing Awareness for Orphans

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**Abstract:** Stunting remains a chronic nutritional issue in Indonesia, particularly among children under five, affecting cognitive development, physical growth, and the productivity of the younger generation (Ministry of Health, 2023). This community service aims to enhance the role of public administration in promoting policies and programs to combat stunting through education, training, and direct assistance. Activities were conducted in coordination with government officials, health cadres, and local leaders, utilizing local media to raise awareness about nutrition. The results showed a significant increase in community knowledge about stunting and balanced nutrition, with active participation from both officials and residents in the reduction programs. This approach underscores the importance of public administration in fostering sustainable community health initiatives. In parallel, this program also focuses on enhancing community care for orphans through strategies like empathetic communication and social management. Using a participatory and qualitative approach, both the community and orphans were involved in every stage of the activity. The results indicated improved social interactions between the community and orphans, with the children showing positive emotional responses such as comfort and acceptance. The community demonstrated increased participation and responsibility. By integrating empathetic communication with social management, the program successfully enhanced the emotional well-being of orphans and strengthened community solidarity, suggesting a sustainable model for future social care initiatives.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable social development emphasizes not only meeting the material needs of society but also strengthening humanitarian values such as empathy, caring, and social solidarity. These values are essential foundations for building a harmonious and inclusive social life, particularly in responding to the needs of vulnerable groups such as orphans. Orphans are a social group with high economic, psychological, and social vulnerabilities due to the loss of parental figures. This situation demands a social approach that is not only charitable but also oriented towards strengthening emotional relationships and sustainable social support. In this context, empathetic communication strategies and social management are important instruments in increasing public awareness of orphans as part of the social community (Suharto, 2018).

Empathetic communication is understood as a communication process that emphasizes the ability to understand the feelings, needs, and perspectives of others, and to respond sincerely and constructively. Empathetic communication serves not only as a means of conveying messages but also as a medium for building emotional connections and social trust (Hoffman, 2017). In social activities involving orphans, empathic communication plays a strategic role because it can create a sense of security, acceptance, and appreciation. Without empathic communication, social interactions have the potential to become formal and transactional, thus lacking meaningful emotional impact for orphans and the community.

In addition to empathetic communication, social management is also a crucial aspect in increasing the effectiveness of social care activities. Social management refers to the systematic and participatory process of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating social activities. Good social management enables social activities to be more focused, sustainable, and targeted (Dwiyanto, 2018). In the context of caring for orphans, social management is necessary to ensure that various community resources can be optimally managed and not limited to incidental activities.

Social reality shows that community concern for orphans is often sporadic and not systematically managed. Many social activities are conducted only on specific occasions without long-term planning and adequate evaluation. As a result, the impact of these activities on the welfare of orphans and increasing community social empathy is less than optimal. This situation highlights the need for a strategy that integrates empathetic communication with social management so that community concern can be built sustainably and have a real impact (Putnam, 2020).

Community service, as part of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, plays a strategic role in addressing these issues. Universities can contribute through knowledge transfer, mentoring, and facilitation in the implementation of empathetic communication and social management strategies at the community level. Through a participatory approach, universities can help communities design and implement more structured, humanistic, and empowerment-oriented social activities (Chambers, 2017). From a social education perspective, the application of empathetic communication and social management in caring for orphans has high learning value. Communities not only learn to understand the concept of empathy theoretically but also internalize it through direct experience. This process aligns with experiential learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of real-life experiences in shaping social attitudes and values (Kolb, 2015). Thus, social activities designed with an empathetic approach and well-managed have the potential to create sustainable changes in

social attitudes. Several studies have shown that an empathetic approach and systematic social management can improve the quality of social interactions and community awareness of vulnerable groups. Hidayati (2020) stated that humanistic communication in social activities contributes to increased social cohesion. Meanwhile, Rahmawati and Subali (2022) emphasized that good social management is a key factor in the success of community empowerment programs. These findings reinforce the urgency of implementing empathetic communication and social management strategies in orphan care activities. Based on this background, this community service activity aims to implement empathetic communication and social management strategies to increase awareness of orphans. This activity is expected to strengthen community social empathy, improve the quality of social interactions with orphans, and create a model for effectively and sustainably managed social care activities.

## **2. METHOD**

The implementation method for this community service activity uses a participatory and qualitative descriptive approach. The participatory approach was chosen to ensure active community involvement in all stages of the activity, while the qualitative descriptive approach was used to describe the process of implementing empathic communication and social management strategies in depth. The target groups included orphans and members of the community involved in social activities in the community where the service was implemented. The planning stage was carried out through coordination with community leaders and local officials to identify the needs of the orphans and the community's potential. At this stage, an empathic communication strategy was developed to be implemented in the activity, as well as a social management plan that included role allocation, activity schedules, and evaluation forms.

The implementation phase includes outreach activities, empathetic interactions, and managed social activities such as charity, mentoring, and community activities. The entire series of activities is designed to prioritize humanistic, dialogical communication and respect for the dignity of orphans. Social management is implemented to ensure activities run orderly, effectively, and sustainably. The evaluation phase is conducted through observation and reflective discussions with the community and orphans. The evaluation focuses on changes in community social attitudes, the quality of social interactions, and the level of concern developed after the implementation of empathetic communication and social management strategies.

### **3. RESULTS**

The results of the activities showed a significant improvement in the quality of social interactions between the community and the orphans. Throughout the activities, the community consistently implemented an empathetic and supportive communication approach, creating a warmer, more open, and more trusting atmosphere. The orphans responded to these interactions by displaying positive emotional behaviors, such as feeling comfortable in the community, feeling socially accepted, and appreciating the attention given. These responses reflect that the social activities were able to build strong emotional bonds between the community and the orphans, as well as increasing the children's sense of security and confidence in socializing.

Furthermore, this activity also encourages the community to apply structured social management principles in implementing social activities. Community participation is not only physical, such as helping with daily activities or providing facilities, but also involves emotional and social involvement. The community begins to understand the importance of collective responsibility in maintaining the welfare of orphans, including providing attention, listening to children's complaints or needs, and supporting their psychosocial development. With this systematic and empathetic approach, community involvement becomes more organized and sustainable, so that the quality of social interactions formed is not only temporary, but has a long-term impact on the orphans and the community itself.

Furthermore, the improved quality of social interactions is also evident in the formation of a culture of mutual care and empathy within the community. The orphans feel a stronger sense of social connection, while the community becomes more sensitive to the needs and emotional well-being of less fortunate children. This activity demonstrates that the combination of empathetic communication, planned social management, and active community participation can create an inclusive, supportive, and sustainable social climate, ultimately strengthening social ties between individuals and the community as a whole.

The implementation of community service demonstrated several significant achievements. First, there was an increase in community knowledge regarding stunting, balanced nutrition, and the practice of providing nutritious food to children under five. Interactive outreach activities enabled mothers and families to understand the relationship between nutritional intake and child growth (Mulyadi & Prasetyo, 2022). Second, training and mentoring activities increased the capacity of integrated health post (Posyandu) cadres and village officials to record child growth, monitor nutritional status, and provide regular education to families. This strengthened the function of public administration at the village level as the spearhead of the stunting reduction program (Indrawati & Wahyuni, 2022).

Third, the community demonstrated positive responses and active involvement. Mothers and families participated in group discussions, practiced providing nutritious food, and adhered to child growth monitoring schedules. Cross-sector coordination between the community service team, the Health Office, and the village government became more structured, resulting in a clearer and more effective program implementation process. The community service results also demonstrated the use of simple technology for nutrition monitoring, such as recording child growth using spreadsheets and photographing nutritious food documentation, which facilitated regular program evaluation. Overall, the community service successfully built community awareness and public administration capacity, key factors in the success of the stunting reduction program in the target areas.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

The findings of this activity indicate that the implementation of empathetic communication strategies plays a crucial role in building positive emotional relationships between the community and orphans. Throughout the activity, empathetic communication encompasses not only friendly verbal interactions but also attention to the children's non-verbal expressions, emotional responses, and psychosocial needs. This approach creates a warm and safe atmosphere, allowing the orphans to feel valued, accepted, and more confident in their interactions with the community. This aligns with Hoffman's (2017) theory of social empathy, which emphasizes that the ability to understand and feel the emotional states of others is an essential foundation for building caring, solidarity, and healthy social relationships. Through empathetic communication, children can develop their social skills, learn to express themselves, and develop positive perceptions of social interactions in their environment.

Beyond the emotional aspect, systematically implemented social management has proven to be a key factor in supporting the sustainability of social care activities. Planned activity management includes activity scheduling, task distribution, efficient resource utilization, and regular evaluation of activity implementation. With good social management, activities are not merely incidental or temporary actions, but become part of a sustainable program with a broader impact. This finding aligns with Dwiyanto's (2018) perspective, which emphasizes that the effectiveness of social programs is highly dependent on sound management, coordination, and planning. Communities become more organized, collective responsibility increases, and individual involvement in supporting orphans becomes more consistent.

The integration of empathetic communication and social management in community service activities has a dual impact. First, the emotional well-being of orphans is improved by creating a safe, supportive, and caring social environment. Children can feel safe, accepted, and valued, which in turn supports their psychosocial development. Second, this approach strengthens the community's social empathy, as they learn to understand children's emotional needs, foster a sense of caring, and increase collective responsibility for the orphans' well-being. The synergy between a humanistic approach and sound management is key to the success of sustainable social care activities, as it enables the formation of a culture of care and empathy within the community while ensuring the effectiveness and continuity of the program.

Furthermore, the combination of empathetic communication strategies and structured social management also provides an opportunity to build a social intervention model that can be replicated in other communities. By emphasizing the importance of emotional connections and systematic activity management, social care programs can be expanded to involve broader community groups and target a wider range of children. This demonstrates that the integration of humanistic and managerial principles not only improves the quality of social interactions but also strengthens community capacity to design and implement effective, sustainable social programs that have a real impact on children's well-being.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This community service activity demonstrated that the application of empathetic communication and social management strategies has proven effective in increasing community care and attention towards orphans. The empathetic communication strategies implemented during the activity not only created warm and caring interactions but also encouraged the community to be more sensitive to the children's emotional needs. The orphans responded to these interactions by showing a sense of comfort, acceptance, and appreciation, resulting in a more harmonious, open, and trusting social relationship between the community and the children. This approach fostered a deep sense of empathy among the community, encouraging them to actively participate, not only physically, but also emotionally and socially, in supporting the orphans' well-being.

In addition to strengthening emotional bonds, systematically implemented social management enables social care activities to become more structured and sustainable. Planned activity management includes scheduling activities, allocating responsibilities, optimally utilizing resources, and monitoring and evaluating activity implementation. With good management, community participation becomes more coordinated, collective responsibility

increases, and each activity can be carried out efficiently without causing chaos or disorder. This confirms that the success of social programs depends not only on the good intentions or concern of individuals, but also on the community's ability to manage activities professionally and systematically.

The integration of empathetic communication and social management has a significant dual impact. For the orphans, this approach improves their emotional and social well-being, creating a safe, supportive environment, and building self-confidence. For the community, this activity fosters collective awareness, increases engagement in social activities, and builds a more sustainable culture of caring. The synergy between a humanistic approach that emphasizes empathy and sound management that emphasizes systematic activities has proven to be key to the program's success. With this model, social care activities are no longer sporadic or incidental, but can become sustainable programs that provide real and measurable benefits to the community and the orphans.

Going forward, this approach, which integrates empathetic communication and social management, is expected to be implemented more broadly and sustainably, not only in one particular community or region, but also at various levels of society. This approach has the potential to serve as a model for implementing other social activities, including education, health, and child and family empowerment programs. Thus, this strategy can support inclusive social development, enhance community solidarity, and create a caring, participatory, and sustainable social ecosystem at the local and regional levels.

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