



Building Social Empathy Through Orphanage Assistance Activities Bumi Ayu Village

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Abstract. *Stunting is a persistent nutritional problem in Indonesia, especially among children under five, affecting the nation's human resource potential. The high prevalence of stunting leads to long-term issues in cognitive development, physical growth, and the overall productivity of the younger generation (Ministry of Health, 2023). This community service initiative seeks to enhance the role of public administration in promoting policies and programs aimed at reducing stunting. It involves education, training, and hands-on community support, coordinated with government officials, health cadres, and local leaders. The initiative utilizes local media to increase awareness about proper nutrition. The results show a noticeable improvement in community knowledge about stunting and balanced nutrition, with both officials and residents actively participating in stunting reduction efforts. This service emphasizes the importance of strengthening public administration through capacity-building, intersectoral coordination, and the use of information technology to meet program objectives. Recommendations are made for sustainable, participatory, and data-driven approaches to stunting reduction.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Social development is essentially oriented not only toward improving material well-being, but also toward strengthening humanitarian values that foster empathy, solidarity, and social awareness within society. In the context of sustainable development, social aspects hold a strategic position because they determine the quality of relationships between individuals and social cohesion within society (Suharto, 2018). Social empathy is a crucial foundation for building a harmonious community life, as it enables individuals to understand the conditions, feelings, and needs of others more deeply. Social empathy is not only affective but also reflected in concrete actions that promote social care and justice (Hoffman, 2017). Amidst the development of modern society that tends towards individualism, the value of social empathy often experiences degradation, so systematic efforts are needed to revitalize collective awareness. One concrete form of cultivating social empathy is through community-based social activities that involve direct interaction between residents, such as orphanage assistance activities. These activities have the potential to be an effective social learning medium because they connect moral values with real experiences in the community (Goleman, 2018).

Social empathy is conceptually understood as the ability of an individual or group to sense and understand the emotional and social conditions of others, then respond positively

through beneficial actions (Hoffman, 2017). Social empathy plays a crucial role in building solidarity and strengthening social bonds within a community. According to Putnam (2020), communities with high levels of empathy and social trust tend to be better able to collectively address various social issues. However, social reality shows that changes in lifestyles, economic pressures, and the flow of globalization have pushed society toward an increasingly individualistic orientation. This condition has resulted in a decline in social sensitivity toward vulnerable groups, including orphans. Therefore, efforts to build social empathy need to be carried out in a planned and sustainable manner through participatory and educational social activities so that the community not only understands cognitively but is also moved emotionally and behaviorally (Chambers, 2017).

Orphans are a social group experiencing multidimensional vulnerabilities, including economic, psychological, and social aspects. The loss of a parent, particularly a father or mother, has the potential to have long-term impacts on a child's emotional and social development. UNICEF (2021) states that orphans who lack adequate social support are at risk of experiencing decreased self-confidence, limited access to education, and other psychosocial problems. Furthermore, the economic limitations that often accompany orphanhood can increase the risk of social inequality. Therefore, orphans require special attention not only from their extended family but also from the surrounding community and social institutions. Social support provided through charitable activities not only helps meet material needs but also provides a sense of security, acceptance, and appreciation within their social environment (Santrock, 2019).

Orphan assistance activities cannot be viewed solely as charitable activities, but also as social development instruments with educational value. These activities have the potential to foster collective community awareness of the importance of social awareness and shared responsibility for vulnerable groups. According to Suharto (2018), effective social development emphasizes community empowerment and active citizen participation in addressing social problems in their environment. Therefore, orphan assistance activities can serve as a means of social learning that instills the values of empathy, solidarity, and mutual cooperation in a tangible way. Direct interaction between the community and orphans allows for the formation of emotional bonds that strengthen social empathy in a sustainable manner (Kolb, 2015).

Bumi Ayu Village is an area with diverse social and economic dynamics. Amidst this development, there are still orphans who need social attention and support from their surrounding community. Although social activities have been carried out several times by the

community and local institutions, their implementation tends to be incidental and not yet integrated into a sustainable program. This situation indicates the need for more structured initiatives to systematically build social empathy in the community. Through a community service program, orphan assistance activities in Bumi Ayu Village are designed as a planned effort to integrate social care values into community practices (Hidayati, 2020).

Community service, as part of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, plays a strategic role in supporting social development at the local level. Universities serve not only as centers for scientific development but also as agents of social change that contribute directly to solving societal problems. Through community service activities, lecturers and students can transform academic values into concrete actions that have a social impact (Chambers, 2017). Orphanage assistance activities carried out within the framework of community service are expected to bridge the gap between the academic world and social reality, while fostering social empathy for both the implementers and the beneficiaries.

Various previous studies have shown that community-based social activities significantly contribute to increasing empathy and social cohesion. Research by Hidayati (2020) demonstrated that community participation in social activities can strengthen a sense of togetherness and solidarity among residents. Meanwhile, Rahmawati and Subali (2022) emphasized that direct interaction with vulnerable groups through social activities is effective in building sustainable social awareness. These findings strengthen the argument that orphan assistance activities not only provide direct benefits to children but also have a positive impact on the development of social character in the wider community.

Based on the description, this community service activity aims to build social empathy through orphanages in Bumi Ayu Village. This activity is designed not only to provide material assistance but also to foster awareness, concern, and social responsibility toward orphans as part of the community. With a participatory and educational approach, this activity is expected to make a tangible contribution to supporting inclusive and sustainable social development.

2. METHOD

The implementation method for this community service activity uses a participatory and qualitative descriptive approach. The participatory approach was chosen because it places the community as the main subject of the activity, not merely an object receiving assistance. Through this approach, the community is actively involved from the planning stage, implementation, and evaluation of the activity. The qualitative descriptive approach is used to describe in depth the process of activity implementation, the form of community participation,

and changes in social attitudes that arise as a result of the orphan assistance activity. The location of the activity was carried out in Bumi Ayu Village, with the main target being orphans and the surrounding community directly involved in the social activity. The location selection was based on considerations of the presence of orphans who need social support and the community's readiness to actively participate in community service activities.

The activity planning stage begins with coordination with village officials, community leaders, and local representatives. This coordination aims to identify the number of orphans, their socio-economic conditions, and priority needs that need to be met. Furthermore, planning includes determining the implementation time, the type of assistance to be provided, and the division of roles among the parties involved. This stage also involves fundraising and resource mobilization, involving lecturers, students, and the community as a form of social collaboration. This participatory planning process is expected to foster a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the activity's success.

The implementation phase of the activity includes providing assistance in the form of basic necessities and school supplies, as well as supporting activities such as group prayers and educational interactions. The activities are designed not only to focus on the distribution of material assistance but also on creating warm and humane social interactions between the community and the orphans. This interaction is an important means of fostering social empathy, as the community can interact directly and understand the real situation of the orphans. The entire series of activities is carried out with an emphasis on the values of togetherness, simplicity, and respect for the dignity of children.

The evaluation phase was conducted qualitatively through direct observation during the activity and reflective discussions with the community and village officials after the activity concluded. The evaluation focused on the level of community participation, the emotional responses of the orphans, and changes in community attitudes toward the social care activity. The results of this evaluation were used as a reflection on the activity's effectiveness in building social empathy and as a basis for improvements in the implementation of similar community service activities in the future.

3. RESULTS

The results of the community service activities demonstrate the active participation and high enthusiasm of the Bumi Ayu Village community in the orphanage assistance program. The community is involved not only as donors but also as organizing committee members and program facilitators. This involvement is evident from the preparation stage through to the

implementation stage, reflecting increased social awareness and a sense of collective responsibility for the plight of orphans in the surrounding area. Active community participation is an important indicator that this activity is able to significantly stimulate social empathy and strengthen social ties between residents.

From the perspective of the orphans, the charity activities have a positive impact, both materially and psychosocially. The assistance provided helps meet basic needs and supports the continuation of the children's education. Furthermore, the interactions established during the activities foster a sense of acceptance, appreciation, and attention from their social environment. The children displayed greater expressions of happiness, openness, and self-confidence during the activities. This indicates that the charity activities not only provide short-term benefits but also contribute to strengthening the orphans' social and emotional well-being.

4. DISCUSSION

The results of this community service activity demonstrate that participatory orphan assistance programs can be an effective means of building social empathy within the community. Active community participation, from the planning stage to the implementation stage, reflects a growing collective awareness of the importance of social awareness. This finding aligns with Suharto's (2018) view that social development will be effective if the community is actively involved as a development subject. Through direct involvement, the community not only understands social problems conceptually but also emotionally experiences the conditions of vulnerable groups.

The positive impact of activities on orphans demonstrates that social support provided through direct interaction significantly impacts children's psychosocial well-being. This reinforces UNICEF's (2021) findings, which emphasize the importance of a supportive social environment for the development of orphans. In addition to material assistance, caring and warm social interactions play a role in building a child's sense of security and self-confidence. Therefore, these activities can be understood as a comprehensive form of social intervention, as they address both material and non-material aspects simultaneously.

From a social learning perspective, this activity serves as a contextual learning medium for the community. Direct interaction with orphans allows the community to internalize the values of empathy, solidarity, and social concern through real-life experiences. This finding aligns with the experiential learning theory proposed by Kolb (2015), which states that experiential learning is more effective in shaping attitudes and values than purely theoretical learning. Therefore, orphan assistance activities not only impact the beneficiaries but also

contribute to sustainable changes in community social attitudes. Furthermore, this activity emphasizes the strategic role of community service as part of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education in supporting social development at the local level. Universities act as facilitators, connecting academic knowledge with real community needs. Synergy between universities, the community, and the village government is a crucial factor in creating sustainable and impactful social activities. Therefore, the orphanage assistance program in Bumi Ayu Village can serve as a model for good community service practices oriented toward strengthening social empathy.

5. CONCLUSION

Community service activities through orphanages in Bumi Ayu Village demonstrate the effectiveness of a community-based social approach in building and strengthening social empathy. This activity serves not only as a means of distributing material assistance but also as a social learning medium capable of fostering community awareness, concern, and social responsibility towards vulnerable groups. Active community participation from the planning stage to the implementation of activities is a key indicator of the program's success in encouraging broader and more sustainable social engagement.

In addition to providing direct benefits to orphans, this activity also positively impacts their psychosocial well-being through warm and humanistic social interactions. Orphans feel more accepted, valued, and cared for by their social environment, which ultimately contributes to increased self-confidence and emotional security. Thus, orphan assistance activities can be understood as a comprehensive form of social intervention, as they address both the material and non-material aspects of children's lives.

Overall, this community service activity underscores the importance of synergy between universities, the community, and the sub-district government in supporting inclusive social development. The orphanage assistance program in Bumi Ayu Sub-district can serve as a model for good community service practices oriented towards strengthening social empathy and community solidarity. Going forward, similar activities are expected to be implemented sustainably and developed with broader mentoring programs to optimize their social impact.

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