

## COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT IN EFFORTS OF POVERTY CONTROL IN CENTRAL EAST TIMOR DISTRICT

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### ABSTRACT

*Poverty is not only understood to be limited to economic incapacity, but also the failure to fulfill basic rights and differences in treatment for a person or group of people who are more dignified. The need for empowerment for the poor so that the fulfillment of food, health, education, employment, housing, clean water, security from the treatment or threat of violence and the right to participate in social life. To alleviate poverty, we must prioritize programs that favor and empower the poor through community development and the improvement of the people's economy. This effort must be realized in a strategic step / stage that is directed directly at expanding the access of the poor to development resources and creating opportunities for the community to participate in the development process, so as to overcome their underdevelopment. To be able to make this happen, it can be done by forming community business groups that aim to realize: Increased business ability, Increased income, business development and Increased social awareness and solidarity among KUBE members and with the surrounding community. This paper uses a literature review that reviews the strategy of empowering the poor in TTU district as an effort to alleviate poverty. Thus the need to prioritize the empowerment of the poor through KUBE as a means of gathering the poor to try to get out of poverty.*

Keywords: Community Empowerment, Poverty Reduction

### INTRODUCTION

Poverty is a socio-economic disease experienced by all countries including developed countries, such as the United Kingdom and the United States and other developed countries. In Indonesia since the beginning of its independence, various efforts were made to overcome the problems of the newly independent nation. These efforts were carried out in various aspects of community life including economic problems related to poverty. This has been stated in the preamble to the 1945 constitution "... protecting all Indonesians and all Indonesian blood and to promoting public welfare, educating the nation's life ...". This shows the commitment of the Indonesian people to overcome the problems of their people's lives since the beginning of independence.

In Indonesia in 2019, the number of poor people (below the poverty line) reached 26.58 million people (10.12 percent) of the population of Indonesia and decreased when compared to 2018 of 27.77 million people (10.64 percent). The decreasing number of poor people is due to various community empowerment programs launched by the government that simply touch the poor. Substance, namely enabling and independence of the community. Empowerment is not only strengthening individual members of the community, but also instilling modern cultural values such as hard work, frugality, openness, accountability as part of empowerment efforts, meaning empowerment dimensions, not only concerning efforts to change cognition, but foster one's desire to actualize self and provide psychological experiences that make a person feel helpless.

The need for empowerment of the poor which is coordinated with the principles of entrepreneurship to work together, collaborate to develop creativity (Jafar, 2019). The government seeks to overcome poverty in Indonesia by launching a number of social assistance programs as a form of empowering the poor since 2013. These programs include: First, the Family Hope Program (PKH), which is conditional non-cash assistance for 10 million beneficiary families (KPM) . Second, Indonesia Smart Cards with a target of 20.1 million school-age children. This number is up compared to 2018 which is targeted at 19.7 million. For PKH the target is as many as 10 million beneficiary families. There are also KIP targeted at 20 million children. Third, Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT), is targeted at 15.6 million KPM which is carried out in stages to all districts / cities. Fourth, Indonesia Healthy Card (KIS) with a target of 96.8 million people or 40 percent of the lowest income population. In addition, the government has also prepared a program to accelerate poverty reduction in 2019, one of which is through the village fund which is projected at 4.9-5.3 percent of GDP. Then the People's Business Credit (KUR) with a 7 percent interest subsidy scheme through 41 distributors and 11 guarantor companies. Furthermore, ultra-micro financing with a maximum of IDR 10 million per customer with an interest of 2-4 percent and is channeled by Non-Bank Financial Institutions (LKBB). Based on the study of Madajewicz (1999), the program issued by Grameen Bank (GB), namely the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) and the Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB), both of which are Bangladesh government programs in empowering the poor as an effort to eradicate poverty have a positive impact on poverty community productivity and the form of group loans on grameen banks affect collaboration between community group members and other communities.

In India, the Burgess study (2005) found that the Central Bank of India instructed every commercial bank in India to form 4 (four) rural bank units named social banks. The policy was carried out from 1977-1990, finally in the decade of that time to reduce poverty levels in India. Because through the established social bank business financing procedures become very easy and simple. While in Indonesia, Nurilya Fitri (2018) in her study, the poor in the city of Yogyakarta showed a decrease in poverty by establishing a joint business group (KUBE). Through a joint business group formed by the poor themselves by opening electronic mutual assistance stalls (e-warung). In this joint venture, various basic needs of the community are sold as well as a means to disburse the non-cash food assistance program, replacing the rice program for the poor. At each e-warung, Rp. 30 million was used as initial capital and to improve the place of business. With the establishment of the KUBE for the poor, there has been a decline in poor families in the city of Yogyakarta from 18,730 households to 18,651 households in 2017. From

various studies conducted on the empowerment of the poor in several countries, there is a positive correlation between community empowerment and poverty reduction .

TTU district, as one of the districts in NTT which has a number of poor people, has done quite a lot of various community empowerment programs as an effort to reduce poverty even though it has not been optimal in overcoming the problem of poverty. The program of forming KUBE PKH for the poor to increase the ability to work together members in groups as well as increase social awareness and solidarity of its members and with the surrounding community in order to be free from the shackles of poverty. Hidayat study results (2019) that poverty reduction efforts are carried out by community empowerment in joint business groups (KUBE) in order to establish independence in a professional and self-disciplined society. This is done in 3 forms namely motivation, training and capital. In addition, there is a program from PNPM Mandiri, by forming a livestock business unit group, horticulture, savings and loans for women and other programs to empower the poor in TTU District. In line with the results of Kirmati's research (2018), increasing people's income and employment opportunities for the poor is done through PNPM-Mandiri as an effort to reduce poverty. Various forms and methods are carried out through empowering the poor so that they can reduce poverty while reducing income disparities in the community. Some of the studies show that the importance of empowerment for the poor is to be released from the shackles of poverty so that the need for empowerment is carried out continuously for communities that are classified as poor. Because through empowerment will be encouraged creativity so as to increase community productivity. This paper uses a study conducted with a literary study approach and aims to describe how the empowerment of the poor in poverty alleviation efforts in TTU District.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. Poverty in North Central Timor District

If you pay attention, the number of poor people in 2017 has decreased. In 2017 there was a change in trend with the graph increasing but the changes that occurred were still within the limits of reasonableness,  $\pm 0.22$  percent. The number of poor people declined starting in 2015 with a significant level of decline. The percentage of poor people, in general, continues to decline, showing a consistent poverty depth index up to 2017. In 2016, the poverty severity index was 0.95 and decreased to 0.72 in 2017. Over the past few years a downward trend has been seen. poverty severity index in TTU District, which shows that until 2017 the expenditure of the poor tends to increase. While the average per capita income of TTU residents in 2017 is Rp.15,524 per day while the average purchasing power is Rp.5,679 / day. When compared to the NTT Province's Regional Minimum Wage of Rp.1,150,000 or equivalent to Rp.53,333 / day, it is clearly seen that the per capita income of the population is still very low,  $\pm 1: 2.5$  from the NTT Province whose impact is at a relatively low population expenditure. Source of household income, the majority of farmers with a composition of 47.81 percent of the total population. Agricultural output is very dependent on climatic conditions. The condition of the agricultural sector in TTU which depends on climate, because it is in a climate transitional zone between the humid Asian climate and dry Australia, has caused crop farming to often fail to harvest and trigger food insecurity. The low income of farmer households is also caused by the low quality of human resources as the main trigger of poverty which is indicated by the human development index (HDI) in the range of 61.54 in 2016 and increased to 62.03 in 2017.

### 2. Cultural conditions related to poverty in TTU District

Factors and cultural conditions in TTU District as one of the causes of poverty turned out to cause a variety of attitudes and opinions, both pro and contra. The Social Monitoring and Early Response Unit (SMERU) study in several districts in East Nusa Tenggara found a variety of opinions regarding the issue of belis (Mawardi 2006). One of the most widely expressed opinions by the community in the community under study is concerning the effect of belis (dowry) on the condition of family welfare. In general, people, especially from the younger generation, feel belis as a burden that must be met, especially at the time of marriage and death. This burden is felt to burden the family economy, especially for poor families, because of the limited assets they have to pay off the belis. Assets that are often used as a means of payment for belis are livestock, such as cattle or pigs, so that more people are found who save their assets or save in the form of livestock rather than other forms of savings (such as money) so that they can be used immediately at any time if there are customary needs (belis ). For marriages, the number of livestock that must be given to women often exceeds the assets owned by men, so they have to pay in installments for many years, and sometimes they have to owe money to pay off the belis. This is considered as a trigger of poverty for the people of TTU district.

### 3. Poverty Relations and Economic Development in North Central Timor

One of the main factors affecting poverty in TTU district is the development of the regional economy. Poverty is a condition where there is an inability to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, education, and health. Poverty can be caused by the scarcity of means of meeting basic needs or the difficulty of access to education and employment. While the economy of a region is said to experience growth or development if the level of economic activity is higher than what was achieved in the previous period (Kuncoro, 2008). According to Kuncoro, economic growth as a long-term increase in the ability of an area to provide more and more types of economic goods to its population, this ability grows in accordance with technological progress and the necessary institutional and ideological adjustments (Jhingan, 2012). Meanwhile, according to Budiono (1994), economic growth is a process of long-term per capita output growth that occurs when there is a tendency (per capita output to rise) that comes from the internal processes of the economy (the forces within the economy itself), not from outside and temporary nature that is self generating, that the growth process itself produces a strength or momentum for the continuation of the growth in subsequent periods (Budiono, 1994).

In TTU District, there has been an increase in economic growth, a decrease in the number and percentage of poor people in the last 5 years related to various empowerment programs carried out by the government towards poor people. As for the decline

in the rate of economic growth has increased even though not yet optimal because it is closely related to the rate of decline in the proportion of the poor. This can be seen from the ability or purchasing power of the people as seen from the poverty line that has increased from the last few years. The poverty depth index, which shows the average size of each population's expenditure gap against the poverty line, has also increased for the last 5 years and the poverty severity index shows a picture of the distribution of spending among the poor.

Table 1  
Poverty line, percentage of poor population  
and the poor population of TTU District in 2012-2017

Year	Poor Residents (000 people)	Percentage of poor population (%)	Poverty line (Rp / capita / month)	Poverty depth index	Poverty severity index
2012	50,70	21,37	238.249	2,24	0,37
2013	51,80	21,59	261.995	2,81	0,51
2014	50,72	20,89	274.564	2,98	0,58
2015	61,96	25,20	290.296	4,22	0,98
2016	59,34	24,07	316.487	4,30	0,95
2017	58,60	23,52	335.517	3,33	0,72

Source: TTU BPS, 2018

Increasing the economy of a region related to poverty is usually influenced through the prices of food commodities, the problem of rising unemployment, worsening labor market prospects, weakening demand for goods and services, as well as a decline in agricultural production which results in a decrease in the level of income and purchasing power of low income populations. The low purchasing power of people towards food causes the increasing problem of the level of public health (malnutrition). For economic growth and per capita GRDP of the TTU district, when compared to the economic growth of the NTT Province level for the last 5 years it is not too different, although the increase is not too significant.

Table 2  
GRDP per capita population and economic growth  
In TTU Regency and NTT Province in 2012-2017

Year	TTU district		NTT Province	
	GRDP per capita	Economic Growth	GRDP per capita	Economic Growth
2012	9.493.334	4,42	6.726.650	5,46
2013	10.260.547	4,40	12.379.020	5,41
2014	11.163.349	4,58	13.619.198	5,05
2015	12.179.883	4,70	14.867.165	4,92
2016	13.328.396	4,84	16.132.906	5,17
2017	14.514.362	5,09	17.241.258	5,16

Source: TTU BPS, 2018

The weakening of the TTU district economy in 2017 is due to the small growth of the agricultural sector as a result of frequent disasters which then have an impact on crop failure and crop failure. This makes the food crops sub-sector experience static growth. The high economic vulnerability and high risks that occur in the agricultural sector are also caused by high rainfall but in a very short time / season and relatively infertile soil conditions.

Compared to conditions ten years ago, there seems to be no significant change in the economic structure of the TTU district. In terms of employment, there has only been a slight shift in employment between sectors. Seen from the sectoral contribution in GRDP, there is almost no significant change, even there is a slight decrease in the contribution of the manufacturing industry sector and a slight increase in the contribution of the trade sector, general government services, and the livestock subsector. Sectoral growth also shows that the general government services sector, transportation and telecommunications and trade are the three sectors with the highest growth rates.

#### 4. Poor Community Empowerment Strategy

##### 4.1. Definition of community empowerment

Empowerment is an effort to build community capacity, by encouraging, motivating, raising awareness of the potential that is owned and trying to develop that potential into concrete actions (Papilaya, 2007). In harmony with Zubaedi, Ginandjar Kartasasmitha (1996) states that empowerment is an effort to build power, by encouraging, motivating and raising awareness of its potential and striving to develop it. In line with what was explained by Ginandjar Kartasasmitha, according to Payne, quoted by Isbandi Rukminto Adi (2008) said about the efforts of community empowerment (empowerment), basically aimed at: *“To help clients gain power of decision and action over their own lives by reducing the effect of social or personal blocks to exercising existing power, by increasing capacity and self-confidence to use power and by transferring power from environment to clients.”*

From several statements about the meaning of empowerment, it can be concluded that empowerment is an effort made by a person or a group through various activities of providing skills, developing knowledge, strengthening capabilities or potential

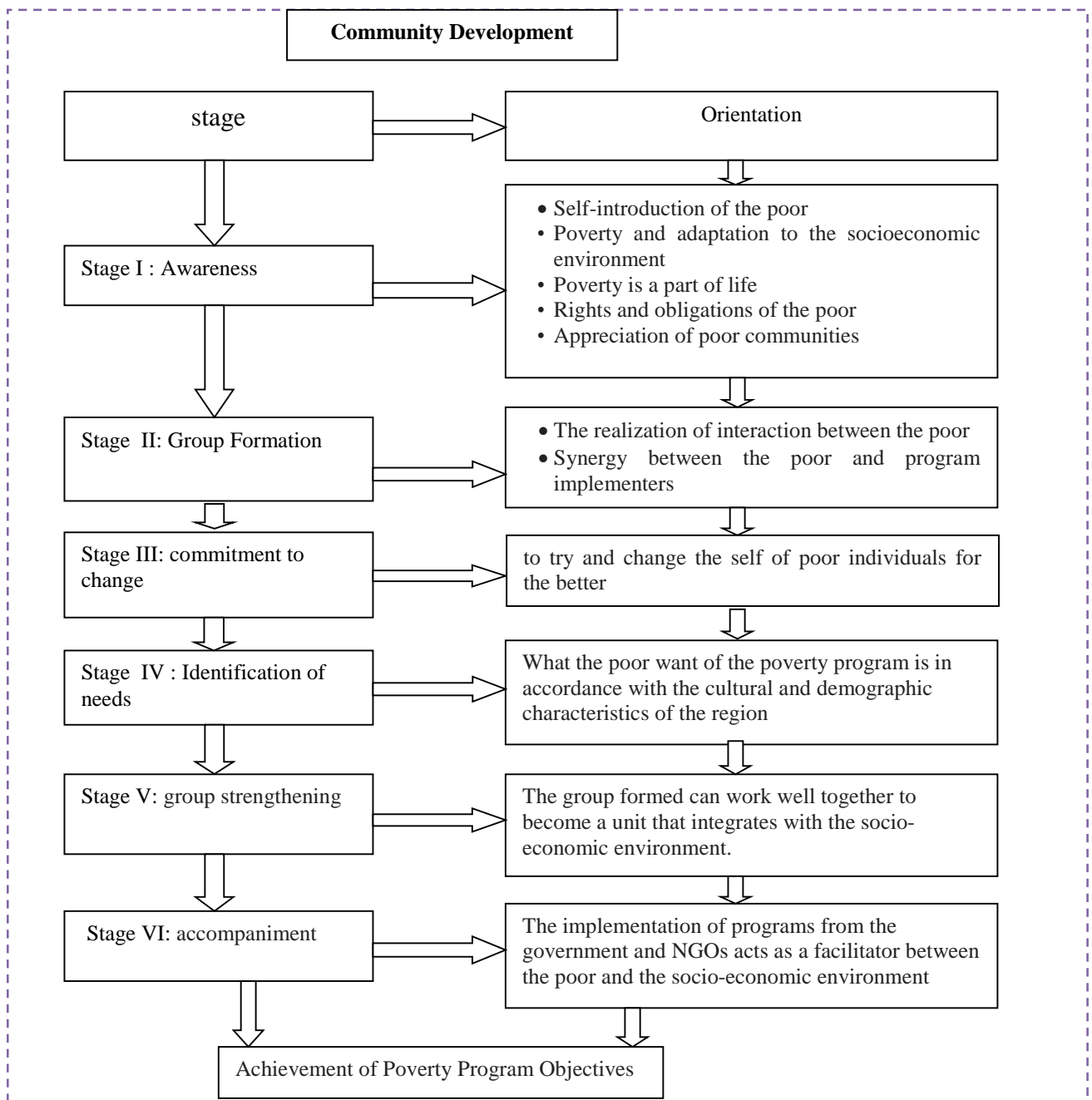
to support the creation of independence, and empowerment of the community both in terms of economy, social, cultural, and education to help solve problems faced.

Meanwhile according to Edi Sungkowo (2008), there are several forms of community empowerment in poverty alleviation efforts in Indonesia, namely:

- a. Focusing efforts to reduce poverty through empowering poor families in meeting food and education needs and in accessing health services. The effort to increase this empowerment is done by strengthening the farming fields, animal husbandry and nature conservation which is a buffer of their food security.
- b. Focusing on efforts to create a policy environment conducive for poor families to switch from the agricultural sector to the non-agricultural sector. This effort is carried out by facilitating the access of poor families to sources of venture capital, technology and information needed. The development of non-agricultural sectors that are 'close' to poor families (people's work, small-scale trade informal sector, etc.) is expected to be the fourth food buffer after farming / farming, animal husbandry and non-cultivation food stock in the forest.
- c. Efforts to increase the empowerment of poor families are associated with efforts to empower their communities (rural / urban community) to be able to help their citizens overcome the problem of poverty in their environment. For this purpose, the philosophy referred to by every development program is "building on what is and is owned by the people", a philosophy that implicitly recognizes the importance of paying attention to the local context.
- d. Repositioning the role of 'outside the village' parties (government, NGOs, business community, universities, etc.), from the beginning as an empowerment agent to become an empowerment facilitator. Efforts to empower poor families based on community are carried out by giving broad authority to rural / urban communities in managing poverty reduction efforts in their areas.

#### 4.2. Empowerment Approach in poverty alleviation in TTU district

Poverty alleviation efforts in TTU district must prioritize programs that favor and empower the community through community development (Community development) as well as improving the people's economy. This effort must be realized in strategic steps directed directly at expanding the access of the poor to development resources and creating opportunities for the grassroots to participate in the development process, so that they are able to overcome their underdevelopment. There are several stages or steps or orientation that need to be understood and taken so that the poverty alleviation program objectives can be achieved.



Picture. 1  
The stages of empowering the poor through groups (Elfindri, 2005).

To realize the direction of development and empowerment of the poor at TTU, the local government further sharpened the focus of development through strengthening institutional empowerment of the community and the bureaucracy. Strengthening community development institutions is carried out using a participatory development model that aims to develop community capacity and the ability of bureaucratic apparatus to carry out the functions of government institutions oriented to the interests of the people (good governance). The participatory development model prioritizes development that is carried out and managed directly by the local community. Such a model emphasizes efforts to develop community capacity in the form of community empowerment (Alex Korankye, 2014).

Community participation will occur if the actors or implementers of development programs in their areas are people, organizations or institutions whose integrity has been trusted and if the program touches on the core problems that are felt and can benefit their welfare. Strengthening the ability of the poor to improve their standard of living is the result or impact of all poverty alleviation program activities. For this, there needs to be integration between institutions in the regency / city to the village level, namely between government-political institutions, economic institutions, the business / private sector and community institutions (Alex Korankye, 2014).

Government institutions related to how government policies and programs can be directed at empowering the people's economy, so that many people can have access and control over local resources and in the decision making system. Economic institutions, are encouraged to create economic systems that are conducive to the growth and development of productive economic enterprises for the poor. Meanwhile, community institutions are aimed at strengthening the socio-economic institutions of the community that are growing and developing.

These programs are a form of intervention by the government, which is expected to support poverty reduction in Indonesia. It is realized that poverty reduction will be able to achieve optimal results if it has been able to involve community participation. Therefore the program to be implemented is based on an approach that is able to encourage the community to participate proactively in the program. The community as the main actor, gives broader authority to the Government in making development decisions, synergies the community with the government in poverty reduction, utilizes local potentials and resources according to regional characteristics and applies local cultural approaches in the development process.

The Family of Hope Program (PKH) which was initiated by the Central Government through the Ministry of Social Affairs since 2007 in the context of poverty alleviation is a program that is really real and really touches people who are really poor, Very Poor Families (KSM) or Very Poor Households (RTSM). This program also wants to raise the dignity of the poor through education facilities for children (CBOs) and health for pregnant women and their babies. PKH programs whose accountability is measured because verification and updating of KSM / RTSM beneficiary data continues to be carried out by PKH facilitators. Therefore, this program is maintained and even improved, especially in advanced program interventions in the form of: Joint Business Groups (KUBE) and Productive Economic Enterprises (UEP) for CBOs.

In TTU, KUBE and UEP have been prepared because KSM / RTSM have been completed after the process of recertification but community life has not been good and is still in the poor category, further programs are needed such as; KUBE and UEP. With the existence of KUBE and UEP, life productivity can be better directed and run better. Through continuous mentoring, KSM / RTSM can use KUBE and UEP as a means to improve lives in a better direction. KUBE is a Joint Business Group which is one of the existing government programs at the Ministry of Social Affairs that aims to empower poor communities by providing venture capital through the Social Empowerment Direct Aid Program (BLPS) to manage Productive Economic Enterprises (UEP) (Dinsos, TTU, 2019).

The implementation of the KUBE and UEP programs in TTU district is the responsibility of the Central Government through the Ministry of Social Affairs especially the District / City Governments who are fully responsible for the implementation of the program, because if PKH is successful, then the problem of Poverty is resolved. In sectoral level coordination and communication, in this case planning between the TTU district Social Service and the Regional Development Planning Agency (BAPPEDA) of TTU district has coordinated very well in terms of planning about PKH. Poverty is not about something that is not owned, but poverty about things that must be owned but cannot be owned even though it is a right that is education and health. So in TTU district, PKH exists to provide equal rights for all communities to obtain education and health facilities so that poverty alleviation is successful and reach a prosperous family in TTU District. TTU Regency which has 24 Subdistricts and 193 villages / kelurahan and has 18,098 families out of poverty, from 2013 to 2018, 335 KUBE have been formed as one of the strategies of the local government in overcoming poverty in TTU District (Dinsos TTU, 2019). This KUBE aims to realize: Increasing the business ability of KUBE members together in groups, Increasing income, Business development, and Increasing social awareness and solidarity among KUBE members and with the surrounding community.

## CONCLUSION

1. Government programs related to community empowerment such as KUBE PKM through district social services, KUR through government banks and private banks, BUMDes at the village level where funds are sourced from village funds (APBN) need to be intensified so that they touch more poor society.
2. Smart Indonesia Card with a target of 20.1 million, Non-Cash Food Aid (BPNT), with a target of 15.6 million KPM and Healthy Indonesia Card (KIS) with a target of 96.8 million people or 40 percent of the lowest income population need to be considered both by the TTU local government so that it is right on the target families.
3. People's Business Credit (KUR) for the poor with a 7 percent interest subsidy scheme needs to be directed at productive units of activity so that ultimately it can increase the incomes of the poor.
4. Traditionally food security at TTU (food security) relies on 3 main supports, namely: Farm farming (maize, cassava and beans), Large livestock (cattle, buffalo and horses), Third buffer is available food crops in the forest. Therefore, when viewed in depth, it can be said that each of the rules and programs that are actually launched must lead to efforts to keep the three supports firm. By strengthening food security, the fulfillment of food ingredients can be met properly.
5. In an effort to empower the poor population in TTU District (especially those related to community-based livelihood) community-based is to give greater appreciation to the natural environment and local wisdoms that have proven to be adaptive to their natural environment. Because basically, the people of TTU district have traditional livelihood patterns (agro-pastoral living patterns) which are proven to be downward-adaptive adaptive to the ecological context which is classified as semi-arid (dry land).

## SUGGESTION

The need for a community empowerment approach in various sectors both economic, political and cultural sectors that are packaged in various government programs to provide awareness and understanding of the capacity and potential development of the poor independently and sustainably. One of the programs as a form of empowerment is the formation of PKH KUBE for the poor who aim to increase the ability to work together members in groups as well as increase social awareness and solidarity among its members and with the surrounding community to be free from the shackles of poverty.

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