

Forest Village Community Development for the Advancement of KUBE of Natural Color Batik “Kehati Meru Betiri”

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ABSTRACT: This study describes community development efforts with a group of forest village communities members of “Kelompok Usaha Bersama (KUBE)” or Joint Business Group, established in 2018. This group was formed by the program initiator, ICCT (Indonesia Climate Changed Trust Fund), focusing on improving environmental ecology for environmental sustainability and people prosperity. This study aims to describe the process of community development to advance the existence of KUBE Natural Color Batik “Kehati Meru Betiri” and to analyze the use of community assets at KUBE Natural Color Batik “Kehati Meru Betiri.” The research used a qualitative approach with descriptive type. In-depth interviews were conducted with 16 informants, selected through purposive sampling technique. The results showed that the community development process was carried out using the perspective of social welfare and ecology. Its stages consist of assessment, planning, action plan formulation, program implementation, monitoring and evaluation, termination, and the utilization of community assets in KUBE Batik. The results from this community development program can indirectly provide a Multiplier Effect for people who are not members of KUBE Batik. One of which is taking part as a batik tourism guide for tourists who come to see the process of batik making, which uses natural color-based plants obtained from the forest in its process. The communities are also encouraged to do re-planting.

KEYWORDS-KUBE Natural Color Batik, Social Forestry, Community's Assets, Ecological Community Development

I. INTRODUCTION

The Forest communities of Wonoasri Village live and depend on the environment around the conservation forest of Meru Betiri National Park (TNMB). The behavior of Wonoasri forest village communities tends to over-exploit the forest, which leads to ecological damage for forest sustainability [1]. Therefore, deforestation or forest environmental conditions by their natural habitat is badly needed. In 2018, the ICCTF (Indonesia Climate Changed Trust Fund), as the program's initiator in collaboration with USAID, the Ministry of Environment, and the Ministry of Forestry, carried out community empowerment and development programs in Wonoasri village. The focuses of ICCTF's presence are improving the forest environment by involving the community living around the TNMB conservation forest area and improving the community's well-being [2].

ICCTF conducted community empowerment and development by approaching the community through the formation of KUBEs by initially carrying out the intervention stages at the community level. Subsequently, it was agreed to form KUBE Batik, which used natural color-based plant coloring in its production process. This

batik production work is KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri" with 20 people involved in batik activities.

In the formation of KUBE Batik in 2018, ICCTF, as the program's initiator, provided a grant or assistance in procuring tools that could support activities during batik training for further batik production. In realizing the establishment of the KUBE Batik, ICCTF collaborated with the Wonoasri Village Government and the Meru Betiri National Park Conservation Forest Center (TNMB) of Wonoasri Resort. TNMB provided prime land that could be used by communities that were the members of KUBE Batik, such as traditional zones and rehabilitation zones. As a result of the formation of KUBE Batik in 2018, the community has been able to create economic independence and reduce the level of exploitation of the forest [3].

In 2021 as the COVID-19 pandemic decreased, the program initiator, ICCTF, again held a community development program that aims to upgrade the existence of the KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri". The community development programs, based on the results of interventions at the community level that have been carried out, need to train the communities who are members of KUBE Batik regarding:

1. Innovation of Batik Motifs

It is necessary to update batik motifs in community development efforts to explore the motifs that will be depicted in batik cloth following flora and fauna in the TNMB forest.

2. Innovation of Nature Coloring

The novelty of natural coloring is fundamental since natural colors are the primary capital in coloring batik cloth. It becomes a characteristic or icon of Wonoasri Village. For this reason, the renewal of natural colors in the form of plants that can be re-explored in color will help the efforts of the community development process by increasing the existence of KUBE Batik.

3. Improving human resources quality in dipping section

At the beginning of its formation, KUBE Batik consisted of 20 people. However, for some reason, KUBE Batik currently consists of only nine. It needs attention to increase human resources, especially in the dipping section, as it is an essential part of producing batik. The public's high interest in ordering batik based on natural colors must be balanced with adequate human resources in KUBE Batik.

4. Digitization Training

Digitization training is one of the trainings needed by the members of the KUBE Batik community. It supports online marketing for batik products by promoting products on the Modern Retail timeline.

In meeting the community's needs in KUBE Batik, several obstacles affect KUBE Batik to develop significantly. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out capacity building; that is, efforts related to training that can support increasing the existence of KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri" by using community assets that can be utilized. It is expected that the increased existence of the KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri" can have a multiplier effect on the forest community of Wonoasri village who is not directly involved in the membership of KUBE Batik. For example, to be a guide for batik tourism.

1.1 PROBLEM FORMULATION

To be more focused and systematic in the discussion, the research questions above are:

1. How is the process of developing the forest village community of Wonoasri through the advancement of the existence of the natural color batik "kehati meru betiri"?
2. How does the use of community assets in the community development process increase the KUBE natural color batik "kehati meru betiri"?

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives by the above problem formulation are:

1. To describe the community development process for advancing the existence of the KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri."
2. To analyze the use of community assets in the community development process through increasing the existence of the KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri."

II. METHODS

2.1 Research Approach

This research used a qualitative approach to explore facts on the community development process of the Wonoasri forest village community to improve their welfare. The forest conservation and community development was conducted to advance the KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri" located in Wonoasri Village, District of Tempurejo, Jember[4].

2.2 Research Type

In efforts to support the research objectives, the research type used is descriptive research, aiming to provide an overview using words and numbers as well as to present a profile (problems), type classification, or an outline toward research related to efforts to develop the Wonoasri forest village community through increasing the existence of the KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru betiri"[5]

2.3 Informant Determination Technique

The selection of informants in this study was carried out by considering the characteristics of the informants using the purposive sampling technique[6]. The informants in this study were 16 people taken from KUBE Batik community, Wonoasri TNMB Resort, Wonoasri Village Government, and Batik Mentor "Godhong Mbako".

2.4 Data Collection Techniques

Data collected in this study were primary and secondary data. Primary data are collected directly by researchers from key informants, while secondary data are collected from various documents/literature. Primary data collection was carried out by in-depth interviews with various informants who were directly involved in the Wonoasri forest village community development through advancing the existence of the KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri". The results of observations and documentation or literature review and analysis of the interview recordings can be observed through photos and videos[7].

2.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was started with collecting raw data from the field, transcribing data, categorizing data, coding, interpreting data, conducting member checking, triangulating, conducting peer examinations, and making conclusions[8].

2.6 Techniques to Improve Research Quality and Research Limitations

Data validity is very important to prove in this study. Therefore, validity and reliability are needed. The credibility of the data includes the extension of observations, research persistence, triangulation, peer discussion, negative case analysis, and member checking[9].

III. RESEARCH RESULTS

The development of the community living around the TNMB forest area is held by increasing KUBE Batik's existence. Wonoasri Village is a buffer village for Meru Betiri National Park (TNMB). Due to its geographical position, most of the population has a livelihood related to forest use. One of the efforts to maintain forest sustainability is in symbiotic mutualism between the Wonoasri Village community and TNMB hall. Social forestry efforts in the future are expected to strengthen the forest's ecological conditions, which will also benefit the surrounding community through an ecological approach[10]. Previously, ICCTF, as the initiator of the program at the beginning of the establishment of KUBE Batik, had built relationships with the TNMB hall and Wonoasri Village Government to discuss issues regarding the sustainability of the empowerment program, namely the community development program as a form of striving for the existence of the Natural Color Batik KUBE "Kehati Meru Betiri." After the establishment of cooperation between various related parties, the next step chosen was to carry out the assessment stage until the fulfillment of the needs of KUBE Batik in the community development process, which aims to increase the existence of KUBE natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri."

The research findings below will discuss matters in line with the research objectives i.e., describing the community development process through the advancement of the existence of the KUBE Natural Color Batik

"Kehati Meru Betiri" including the description of the obstacles and successes of the community development process as well as the analysis of the utilization of community assets.

IV.DISCUSSIONS

The Process of Community Development through Increasing the Existence of KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri"

Community development is one method of social work to improve the community's quality of life through the utilization of the resources available to them and emphasizing the principle of social participation. One form of intervention in Social Welfare Studies is the social intervention method at the community level, which is more closely related to social and community development[11]. Community development is based on the goals that people can and should take responsibility for formulating needs, seeking prosperity, managing resources, and realizing their own life goals. Community development is directed at building supportive communities, a community structure whose life is based on the development and fair distribution of resources and social interaction, participation, and mutual efforts to encourage one another.

In comprehending the community development process in the context of efforts to improve the existence of KUBE Batik, it is necessary to have the community's enthusiasm who are directly involved in all activities of the KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri." To carry out this community development program, the following are the stages of intervention at the community level[12] held in the community development program through increasing the existence of the KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri":

1. Assessment

In this needs analysis, various techniques are used to carry out the assessment, including SWOT analysis to see strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Assessment of village communities supporting the TNMB forest area can be done individually through community leaders or certain community members. Based on the results of the assessment, some problems were encountered by members of the KUBE Batik community, including the lack of training in developing batik motifs and natural coloring, the lack of human resources for dyeing in KUBE Batik, and the absence of digitalization training related to marketing batik products online.

Community participation in this assessment is seen from their enthusiasm about conveying the community needs for development programs through the advancement of the existence of KUBE Batik by training that can support their expertise in making batik.

2. Planning

At this stage, it is known that the community wants a renewal of batik motifs under the existing ecosystem in TNMB. Previously, batik products are associated with natural colors with typical Meru Betiri motifs such as Rafflesia, Javanese chili, Javanese eagle, and leopard. To date, KUBE Batik with natural colors has designed around 20 batik motifs using natural colors from materials around Wonoasri village and forests in TNMB such as Jolawe (Joho plant), teger plant, and noni. However, according to the community, KUBE Batik can still develop the novelty of batik motifs following the ecosystem that lives in TNMB. Therefore, the community plans to hold pieces of training related to batik renewal.

3. Action Plan Formulation

Based on FGDs that have been conducted, the community has determined the priority scale for the activities to be carried out in the action plan process. It includes conducting training on the novelty of batik, adding human resources, especially dyeing into KUBE Batik, and training for social marketing so that the production of batik can be sold to a broader segment.

4. Implementation

The program implementation is reflected by holding technical training to improve community expertise in renewing batik motifs, coloring, and adding human resources, especially for the dyeing section and the marketing of batik products. Their enthusiasm indicates community participation in this implementation

following training carried out based on their shared needs for training on batik innovation to let KUBE Batik excel and exist better.

5. Monitoring and evaluation stage

Monitoring in the community development process is done to see a process of change for the better direction through planned efforts. It means that the monitoring is carried out to maintain batik under standardization or production in terms of technical quality at the planning stage above. The evaluation at KUBE Batik is to increase the expertise of batik members in updating or exploring batik motifs and natural coloring from plants. In addition, it is identified that one process of KUBE Batik was not yet implemented i.e., digitalization training related to the marketing of batik products via buying and selling on the online shopping timeline.

6. Termination

Termination in the intervention process is the final process or termination of the program initiator for empowerment and community development programs if it is felt that the community is empowered, independent, and able to develop their potential. However, in this study, termination has not been carried out since the activities in the form of training on batik production renewal were still ongoing for capacity building to increase the existence of the KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri."

Barriers and Successes in the Community Development Process through Advancement of the Existence of KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri"

The activities of KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri" for the last three years since 2018 have been able to produce batik crafts independently. However, several things must be considered to develop a more independent institution in the future. The existence of obstacles and successes in a community development process is essential to study the benchmarks of obstacles and success of a community development process. The obstacles and successes through increasing the existence of the KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri" are:

a) Barriers:

- The KUBE Batik community members have not updated the motifs and coloring on batik cloth.
- Lack of human resources in the dyeing section in the KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri"

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- Limited knowledge of group members regarding the network of marketing systems and market share.

b) Success:

- Understanding of environmental sustainability

, including re-planting.

- Having expertise in forest utilization and planting, such as the use of natural coloring on plants around TNMB.
- Encouraging community activity in batik training activities by:
 1. Developing the interest and motivation of women's groups such as women farmers, former migrant workers, youth organizations to join KUBE Batik.
 2. Increasing the income of women's groups, women farmers, former migrant workers through batik making skills.
 3. Developing specific batik products of Meru Betiri as the village's flagship craft.
 4. Increasing income for the families of the KUBE Batik community.

Utilization of Community Assets in the Community Development Process through Advancement of the Existence of KUBE Natural Color Batik “Kehati Meru Betiri”

The utilization of community assets in the form of social capital is important to support community development programs through increasing the existence of KUBE Natural Color Batik “Kehati Meru Betiri”. Community assets are managed together by the community. Thus, community assets can be in the form of commonly shared assets which jointly owned to be managed together so that all those involved in the management can receive the benefits.

All achievements from a series of community development processes through increasing the existence of the KUBE Natural Color Batik “Kehati Meru Betiri” are carried out by utilizing community assets through social capital [13], among others:

a. Physical capital

The Utilization of a production house that can still be used as a place for batik production and also a place for training.

b. Financial Capital

The current capital is in the form of cash for batik finance which regulates all income and expenses from batik production.

c. Environmental Capital

Exploring batik motifs by utilizing plants based on natural colors.

d. Technology Capital

Utilizing previously available tools to support the existence of training at KUBE Batik.

e. Human Capital

Increased community participation in the training provided such as batik renewal training.

f. Spiritual Capital

It is related to the KUBE Batik members’ work ethic of which is the basis of cohesiveness and success in a community development program.

The process of community development through increasing the existence of KUBE Natural Color Batik “Kehati Meru Betiri”, by utilizing community assets that can support efforts at KUBE Batik training as described above, has several outcomes are as follows:

a. Training Facilities for KUBE Development

There is batik training held by the program initiator, ICCTF in collaboration with the batik studio "Godhong Mbako" as a batik trainer to improve the skills of community members in KUBE to enable them to explore motifs and color on batik cloth.

b. Hand-Written Batik and Stamped Batik Training Using Natural Colors

The combination of hand-written batik and stamped batik is an amalgamation of batik that has been carved on a special natural color cloth and combined using stamp media. The results obtained from the training are that members of the KUBE Batik community know the art of batik novelty to support efforts to increase the existence of KUBE Batik by combining stamped batik and hand-written batik and the materials used to prepare for the production of stamped batik.

c. Network Utilization for KUBE Natural Color Batik “Kehati Meru Betiri”

Network utilization for the KUBE Natural Color Batik “Kehati Meru Betiri” is very important and needed by the community to support activities in batik production. One of them is by utilizing social media networks to let them able to market natural color batik handicraft products more broadly.

The network utilization is expected to see the needs of the community or related stakeholders to be more grounded in responding to the real needs of the community [14]. Efforts to utilize social media networks at KUBE Natural Color Batik “Kehati Meru Betiri” can be done by marketing products online at modern retail stalls. However, the digitalization training is not yet fully over. Community members of KUBE Batik are only able to create Instagram and Whatsapp Business pages to promote batik handicrafts.

Based on the analysis of the utilization of community assets in the community development process above, it can be stated that the lack of network utilization in the form of digitization will hinder the production of batik cloth for sale to consumers from within and outside Jember Regency. Thus, program initiators need to continue training programs related to digitization. Moreover, KUBE Batik has created social media on Instagram and Whatsapp Bussiness, which must be further developed to help facilitate the process of marketing batik products.

Another result of the community development process in Wonoasri Village is that the development of KUBE Batik has succeeded in creating a multiplier effect. It is one of the successful intervention processes carried out by the ICCTF on Batik KUBE to make the Wonoasri community be more independent and improve the welfare of the Wonoasri community.

The multiplier effect generated by the community that joins KUBE Batik indirectly increases the economic life of the families. The emergence of the multiplier effect in changing community dynamics from which people previously worked in the forest shifts to KUBE Batik. The increase in income from previously relying on the forest sector gets additional income from KUBE Batik in the form of the community being involved in batik ecotourism which is directed to see the batik production process Wonoasri community eventually becomes a batik guide. The batik guide, in this case, serves to guide tourists who come to see the batik process using natural materials (Education of natural color batik)[15].

Community development based on local potential and wisdom is emphasized as a principle in developing the batik industry in Wonoasri Village. The people participating in the workshop or training are not forced to practice the novelty of batik with standard patterns but are given the freedom to be creative by exploring their artistic talents. In training, the emphasis was only on the consistency of the batik philosophy in actualizing its creativity[16]. It optimally utilizes the local potentials and human resources following their abilities and potentials.

It has been evidenced to be a contributor to the success of the home industry for hand-written batik so that it becomes distinctive and raises the name Meru Betiri to be better known by the public. Their desire to improve their lives needs to be cultivated to become a strong trigger to foster an entrepreneurial spirit.

This experience proves that the rehabilitation of forest areas must be approached holistically. The approach to the community by paying attention to social and economic gives a high impact on their activities in treating forests as their ecological environment because, basically, people will use their nearest environment to maintain their survival[17]. Thus, human beings with their intelligence and ability to think must contribute to controlling and directing environmental changes to be positive. Batik has indeed provided benefits to Wonoasri people to increase their income and reduce their dependence on the forest. As an effect, the sustainability of the forest will be maintained, and the community will be prosperous in fulfilling their daily needs.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion explicitly describes the answers to the central questions of this study. This study presents the research findings and discussions. Based on the explanation above, the research purposes are divided into two points. Firstly, to describe the process of community development to advance the existence of the KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri." Secondly, to describe the use of community assets to increase the existence of KUBE natural color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri."

Based on the analysis conducted by researchers regarding the Community Development Efforts in Wonoasri Forest Village for Advancement of the Existence of KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru betiri" in Wonoasri Village, Tempurejo District, Jember Regency, it can be concluded that the process of developing the Wonoasri community for increasing the existence of KUBE Batik Warna Alam Kehati Meru Betiri is carried out through the following efforts:

- Training to improve batik through the use of community assets.
- Improving KUBE Batik dyeing human resources
- Marketing strategy for batik products through modern retail.

The community development process for increasing the existence of KUBE Batik is carried out according to the needs of the local community. The whole process of community development through KUBE Batik is carried out with intervention stages consisting of the following stages:

- a. Assessment
- b. Planning
- c. Action Plan Formulation
- d. Implementation
- e. Monitoring and Evaluation
- f. Termination

In addition, people who have been able to develop activities in the renewal of manufacture and to produce batik are further given reinforcement in the form of understanding forest conservation, mastery of expertise in forest utilization for using coloring on plants, and encouraging community participation in the training activities provided.

The achievements of the entire community development process for increasing the existence of KUBE Batik by utilizing community assets include the use of physical capital, financial capital, environmental capital, technological capital, human capital, social capital, and spiritual capital. It can be done by providing facilities for the development of KUBE Batik, providing education on the combination of handwritten batik and stamped batik, combining colors in handwritten batik and stamped batik, and utilizing the network on the KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri".

Based on this research, several suggestions can be put forward:

It is suggested that KUBE Natural Color Batik "Alam Kehati Meru Betiri" maintains consistency in the community development process or further strengthen the development of community assets through training that must still be held such as digitalization in creating online platforms such as Shopee, Tokopedia, and Bukalapak for natural color batik, so that KUBE Batik is better known by a wider community, and the public finds it easier to place orders for batik products, as well as to control and minimize potential problems or internal and external obstacles in KUBE Batik to maintain the integrity and survival of KUBE Natural Color Batik "Alam Kehati Meru Betiri."

Other suggestions are addressed to the Wonoasri Village Government and Wonoasri TNMB Resort to coordinate with related parties, especially funders and other stakeholders in Jember Regency, such as, Cooperatives Department, Industry and Trade Office, Jember Regency Community Empowerment and Development Agency, and Batik Center partners, etc. This aims to seek the integration of community strengthening through KUBE Natural Color Batik "Kehati Meru Betiri" which is expected to be included in local government programs to facilitate training that can support the existence of KUBE Batik.

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