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The Dynamics of Welfare Dependency and the Reorientation of Empowerment Strategies for the Akit Tribe in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: Empowering indigenous communities is an important part of inclusive development, especially for those who still face limited access to resources, economic opportunities and meeting basic needs. The Akit tribe, as part of Indonesia's social and cultural wealth, has the right to obtain empowerment programs that are appropriate to local conditions and potential. However, social, economic and environmental changes require a more adaptive empowerment approach so that programs do not stop at providing assistance, but are able to produce sustainable change. This article aims to analyze the need for reorientation of the Akit Tribe's empowerment approach and formulate directions for strengthening programs that are more contextual, effective and oriented towards community independence. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach through observation, interviews with local communities and stakeholders, and analysis of empowerment program documents. Data is analyzed thematically by identifying needs, potential, capacity and suitability of programs to local conditions. The results of the study show that reorientation is needed through strengthening community assets, increasing capacity, participating in the planning process, and adapting programs to local social and economic conditions. This approach can also support accurate budget utilization and sustainability of program results. The implication is that the reorientation of empowerment can be a framework for strengthening the development of indigenous communities that is adaptive and has the potential to be developed in communities with relatively similar socio-cultural characteristics.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social development aimed at indigenous communities in Indonesia has largely relied on the paradigm of meeting basic needs through government assistance. Within this framework, indigenous communities are often positioned as beneficiaries rather

than actors with the capacity to determine the direction of their own social and economic change. This pattern of intervention can be seen empirically in various programs, ranging from social assistance and the provision of physical facilities, grants, business capital assistance, to production equipment assistance. Administratively, this approach can demonstrate program affordability and a relatively easy-to-measure number of beneficiaries. However, the availability of assistance has not always been directly proportional to the development of productive capacity, economic independence, or the sustainability of the recipient communities' livelihoods.

The governance issues of empowerment interventions can become increasingly complex when development is designed uniformly for communities with diverse social, cultural, ecological, and livelihood backgrounds. Aid, normatively intended as an empowerment instrument, can lose its transformative power when it is not preceded by an understanding of real needs, local knowledge, productive capacity, social structures, and the environmental conditions in which communities live. In such situations, program success tends to be measured by the distribution of aid, while the process of determining whether that aid can be adapted, managed, and developed by the community has not received equal attention. As a result, interventions that should build capacity can stop at the relationship between the provider and the recipient.

This condition is important to understand in light of the concept of *welfare dependency*. This concept should not be understood simply as the unwillingness of individuals or communities to work and develop their lives independently. Dependence on aid can form through a more complex process, when repeated patterns of intervention create expectations for external assistance, while space for decision-making, learning, and strengthening local capacity is relatively limited. *Welfare dependency* is a phenomenon that needs to be seen as the result of the interaction between policy design, aid distribution mechanisms, institutional capacity, community experience in receiving programs, and the opportunities available to communities to develop their *agency*.¹

Welfare dependency shifts the way we view the failure of empowerment programs. When assistance is not utilized or progresses, the problem cannot be explained solely by low community motivation or weak recipient capacity. Failure can also indicate a mismatch between the intervention's design and the realities of community life. Assistance with production equipment, for example, will not produce economic change if the prerequisites for its use are not in place. Similarly, assistance for productive enterprises can cease when communities lack access to raw materials, markets, technical assistance, or management mechanisms appropriate to local conditions. This, in turn, encourages evaluations of community empowerment to move beyond the simple question of whether assistance has been provided to the more substantive question of whether the intervention has built community capacity to manage, adapt, and develop their existing resources.

Indigenous communities are not entirely devoid of social and economic capacity.² They possess ecological knowledge, social networks, production experience, exchange systems, and resource management practices developed through intergenerational experience.³ However, these capacities are often not the starting point in development program design. Government interventions often begin with identifying deficiencies and needs that must be met through assistance. Shifting the focus from *what communities lack* to *what communities have* is crucial for building an empowerment model that not only provides resources but also strengthens communities' ability to convert these assets into sustainable livelihoods.

The gap between intervention design and local capacity can be observed in the Akit community in Meranti Islands Regency, Riau Province. The Akit is an indigenous community spread across several areas of Riau Province, including Bengkalis Regency, Siak Regency, and Meranti Islands Regency. Long-term social interactions with communities outside the indigenous group, including through marriage and social mobility, have resulted in the Akit's identity and social practices being heterogeneous. Understanding the community's condition cannot be based solely on administrative categorizations of indigenous communities,

¹ Gusti Naufal Rizky Perdana, *Mapping the Development of Social Policy in Indonesia: Analysis of Research Trends and Dominant Concepts*, 2025; Budi Rahman Hakim and Herman L Beck, "Sufistication of Social Welfare Policies in Contemporary Indonesia: Recalibrating Policy Ethics through Tasawuf-Based Values," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Indonesia (JISI)*, December 31, 2025, 16–27, <https://doi.org/10.15408/jisi.v6i2.50028>.

² Timo Duile, "Indigenous Peoples, the State, and the Economy in Indonesia," *Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies*, June 29, 2020, 155-160 Pages, 155-160 Pages, <https://doi.org/10.14764/10.ASEAS-0034>.

³ Ilham Dwi Rafiqi, "Recognition of Indigenous Peoples Values in Indonesia for Policy Addressing Climate Change," *Journal of Law and Legal Reform* 6, no. 1 (2025): 1–40, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jllr.v6i1.11746>.

but requires attention to the diversity of social, economic, and ecological experiences in each location.

Based on the local government inventory that served as the basis for selecting the research location, the Akit community in Kudap Village was placed in the Remote Indigenous Community II category. This situation indicates a need for development intervention, but also highlights the importance of re-examining the current forms of intervention. The target community has work experience, environmental knowledge, survival strategies, and economic options that are adapted to local conditions.

At the research site, there are approximately 37 Akit families, a remote indigenous community concentrated in Hamlet IV. The community's livelihoods are based on various occupations, including fishing, agriculture, and other informal work. The local government has also provided various forms of economic assistance aimed at strengthening community livelihoods. This assistance includes fishing nets, laying hens, and other forms of economic support. Currently, assistance is even being developed through pig farming. However, experience with the implementation of several programs indicates that the distribution of assistance does not automatically result in sustainable economic activity.

One example is the fishing net assistance. This assistance could not be optimally utilized because some recipients lacked the boats necessary to operate them. In other cases, the provision of laying hens also failed to develop as expected. Feed availability, the environmental conditions of settlements located near waterfronts, and management issues were among the obstacles that emerged in program implementation. These initial findings suggest that program problems cannot be simply explained by the community's failure to utilize the assistance. A more fundamental question is whether the assistance design, from the outset, took into account the production chain needs and ecological conditions that would allow for its sustainable use.

This experience demonstrates the importance of facilitators in the empowerment process. Programs that end only with the transfer of assets to beneficiaries risk missing the learning, monitoring, adaptation, and problem-solving mechanisms needed after assistance is received. Without adequate support, communities may acquire new assets but lack the supporting ecosystem to transform them into productive economic activities. Facilitators are not viewed as program administrators, but rather as liaisons between local community knowledge, program resources, technical needs, market access, and government institutions.⁴

The phenomena described highlight a broader issue regarding the relationship between *welfare provision* and *community agency*. On the one hand, the state has a responsibility to ensure vulnerable groups and indigenous communities have access to development resources. On the other hand, interventions that are too oriented toward providing assistance can create an imbalanced relationship if communities are not given sufficient space to identify needs, manage resources, make decisions, and be accountable for the results. The challenge is not to reduce the state's presence, but rather to change its approach, from a provider of aid to a facilitator of capacity building and community asset development.

Given these conditions, *the asset-based empowerment approach* offers a reorientation that is considered more relevant. This approach places the community's existing assets, such as knowledge, skills, social networks, natural resources, economic experience, and local institutions, as the starting point for the empowerment process. External assistance is still necessary, but its function is directed at strengthening and developing existing capacities, not replacing them. With this approach, communities are positioned not merely as program recipients but as actors involved in asset identification, business selection, intervention management, and program sustainability evaluation.

The literature on indigenous community empowerment has focused heavily on poverty, limited access to resources, institutional capacity, and the effectiveness of development programs.⁵ However, there is still room to deepen the understanding of how recurring patterns of aid provision interact with institutional structures and communities' social experiences, shaping their

⁴ Claire Bynner et al., "Facilitators as Culture Change Workers: Advancing Public Participation and Deliberation in Local Governance," *Local Government Studies* 49, no. 4 (2023): 738–58, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2023.2190586>; Cleopas Gabriel Sambo and Iselin Huseby-Lie, "Empowerment, Gender, and Household Dynamics in Households Receiving Social Cash Transfers in Eastern and Southern Africa: Evidence from a Systematic Review," *Development Studies Research* 12, no. 1 (2025): 2553535, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21665095.2025.2553535>.

⁵ Gretchen S. Clarke et al., "Empowering Indigenous Communities Through a Participatory, Culturally Responsive Evaluation of a Federal Program for Older Americans," *American Journal of Evaluation* 43, no. 4 (2022): 484–503, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10982140211030557>; Beverly Laltoog, "Empowering Indigenous Communities: The Pursuit of Quality Education and Peaceful Societies," *Inclusive Society and Sustainability Studies* 4, no. 1 (2024): 43–56, <https://doi.org/10.31098/issues.v4i1.2055>.

tendency toward dependence on external interventions. ⁶At the same time, few studies have linked the issue of *welfare dependency* to the need to redesign empowerment mechanisms through a combination of *agency strengthening*, asset-based approaches, and ongoing mentoring throughout the program cycle. This gap represents the contribution of this research.

This research does not solely question why some government assistance is not utilized effectively by indigenous communities. It focuses on two interrelated issues. First, how the process of *community agency formation* occurs when communities targeted by aid are directed to take a more active role in identifying needs, managing resources, and determining livelihood strategies. Second, how the design of empowerment interventions can incorporate facilitation and mentoring mechanisms as instruments to prevent program failure and strengthen the sustainability of community economic activities.

Based on these issues, this study aims to analyze the dynamics of *welfare dependency* in development interventions aimed at indigenous communities and formulate a reorientation of empowerment strategies that position communities as the primary actors of change. The study of the Akit Tribe community in Meranti Islands Regency was conducted to understand the relationship between aid design, local capacity, *community agency*, the role of facilitators, and the sustainability of empowerment programs. Theoretically, this study is expected to broaden the discussion on *welfare dependency* by incorporating the context of indigenous communities and local institutional dimensions. Practically, this research is directed at producing an empowerment framework that moves from the logic of *beneficiary-oriented intervention* to an asset-based approach, strengthening community agency, and ensuring that external assistance functions as a trigger for independence, rather than as a source of recurring dependency.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The proposed conceptual framework is based on the assumption that development assistance activities carried out in indigenous communities do not occur in a social space devoid of consequences. Each program will be confronted with the social, cultural, economic, environmental, and institutional conditions existing in that community. The success of a development intervention is determined not only by the form and amount of assistance provided but also by the relevance of the intervention to local conditions and the community's ability to transform the assistance into productive resources. Government assistance is seen as a tool of intervention, not as the end result of the empowerment process.⁷

This approach is crucial for exploring the mechanisms of welfare dependency. In this research, welfare dependency is not considered an inherent characteristic of the community itself or a consequence of community unwillingness to work. Instead, welfare dependency is viewed as a process that can emerge through the interaction of factors such as patterns of assistance provision, experiences receiving programs, limitations in supporting capacity, and community decision-making space. If a program focuses more on assistance provision than on capacity building, potential communities remain recipients of assistance, while the process of building ownership, responsibility, and management capacity remains underdeveloped.

From this perspective, the local context is a crucial component influencing the acceptance and use of an intervention. Government-provided resources do not constitute a community's economic resources. The economic effects of aid depend heavily on the availability of complementary resources, technical knowledge, infrastructure, market connections, ecological conditions, and compatibility with the community's lifestyle. The example of fishing net aid demonstrates that providing production tools will not necessarily increase fishing activity if the community lacks complementary tools such as boats. Similarly, livestock aid may face challenges due to a lack of consideration of issues such as feed, management knowledge, and husbandry systems. The problem lies not in the community's use of aid but in the intervention's ability to integrate aid resources with the community's real-life circumstances.

This situation demonstrates the relationship between intervention design and reality, leading to a phenomenon known in this research as the implementation gap, meaning the gap between government-designed interventions and the conditions necessary for their implementation in the community context. Implementation gaps can manifest themselves in the form of mismatched

⁶ Ulum Chazienul Mochamad et al., "Strategies and Models for Empowering Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in Encouraging Tourism Sector Performance," *JPAP: Journal of Public Administration Research* 11, no. 1 (2025): 57–68, <https://doi.org/10.30996/jpap.v11i1.11912>.

⁷ Mikaela Vasstrøm and Roger Normann, "The Role of Local Government in Rural Communities: Culture-Based Development Strategies," *Local Government Studies* 45, no. 6 (2019): 848–68, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2019.1590200>.

assets, limited technical knowledge, lack of complementary access, mentoring, or post-distribution monitoring. Implementation gaps are important because they allow us to explain the phenomenon of administrative success of an intervention without corresponding impact on the lives of recipients.

Today, the concept of community institutions is an integral part of the conceptual framework of this research. Community institutions are defined as the ability of communities to assess their own needs, make decisions, manage resources, solve problems, and formulate development strategies using their own resources and capabilities. Improving these institutions will enable communities to become active participants in the development process, taking a leading role in shaping the direction of change rather than being passive recipients of aid. Conversely, when decision-making and program management are carried out outside the community, opportunities for program takeover are limited. Therefore, community institutions are an important tool that connects aid provision with creating sustainable self-reliance.⁸

This conceptual framework calls for a reorientation of the empowerment approach. This does not mean excluding government assistance, but rather reorienting its purpose. Government assistance should no longer serve the purpose of filling gaps in communities but should instead be a tool for strengthening community capabilities. An asset-based approach is applied to shift the starting point of interventions from what communities lack to what communities already possess and can use. These assets can include community knowledge, skills, social networks, natural resources, experience from economic activities, community institutions, or other forms of social capital. External assistance is expected to act as a catalyst, but not as a primary resource.

Based on the interrelationships between these concepts, this study examines welfare dependency, implementation gaps, and community institutions as interconnected parts of the empowerment process. When interventions are envisioned and not appropriate to the local environment and lack adequate facilitation, the risk of aid dependency increases. Conversely, when interventions are based on the identification of local assets, community involvement in decision-making, facilitation, and the ability to adapt to the local environment, there is a greater opportunity to create stronger and more sustainable community institutions.

With the proposed empowerment approach, this study does not assess empowerment success in terms of the amount of assistance provided or assets disbursed. Instead, success is measured by the extent to which the intervention successfully transforms the community from recipients of assistance to developers and decision-makers of development resources. Furthermore, dependence on welfare, which is not seen as a final stage for the community, can still be addressed through better intervention design, strengthening community institutions, and asset-based empowerment. In other words, research on the Akit community in Meranti Regency focuses on building this transformation through a balance between the government, facilitators, and the community.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study design to understand the dynamics of *welfare dependency*, community experiences in receiving empowerment interventions, and the process of forming *community agency* in the Akit Tribe community in Kudap Village, Meranti Islands Regency, Riau Province. Qualitative methods were chosen because the research focuses not only on program outcomes but also on experiences, implementation processes, forms of interaction between the government and the community, and conditions that influence the sustainability of aid utilization.

Research informants were determined purposively based on their knowledge, experience, and involvement in the empowerment process of the Akit Tribe community. A total of 7 informants were involved in the research, consisting of the Head of the Social Service of the Meranti Islands Regency, the Head of the Social Service of the Meranti Islands Regency, the Secretary of Kudap Village, elements of the Akit Tribe youth, and the Akit Tribe community. This composition was used to obtain different perspectives, both from the government side as the designer and implementer of the intervention and from the community side as the recipient and actor of the program. Community informants were selected based on their experience in receiving, using, or interacting with empowerment programs provided by the government.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation. Interviews were used to explore

⁸ Andreas Scheba and Ivan Turok, "The Role of Institutions in Social Housing Provision: Salutory Lessons from the South," *Housing Studies* 38, no. 6 (2023): 1132–53, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2021.1935765>; Robertson James, *The Role of Local Communities in Social-Based Economic Empowerment*, 1, no. 1 (2025).

informants' experiences regarding the forms of assistance received, the distribution and utilization process, obstacles in aid management, forms of mentoring and monitoring, and views on community economic independence. Observations were conducted to directly understand environmental conditions, livelihood activities, asset utilization, and the community's social situation. Documentation was used to supplement field data, particularly regarding programs, forms of intervention, and institutional conditions relevant to the research.

Data analysis was conducted thematically using several processes such as organizing data from interviews and observations, identifying significant themes, grouping data based on themes, interpreting relationships between themes, and concluding findings. Key themes for data analysis included government intervention, asset utilization, dependence on social assistance, community institutions, implementation gaps, facilitation, and empowerment reorientation.

Dependence is not considered an inherent aspect of society in this case, but rather, the analysis focuses on how the interaction between program design and implementation, local conditions, and community institutional space, influences the sustainability of empowerment outcomes. The validity of the data analysis is enhanced through a process of triangulation of sources and techniques. Source triangulation involves comparing data from the government, village government, youth, and members of the Akit Tribe. Meanwhile, triangulation of techniques involves comparing interview results with findings from observations and documentation. This comparison is necessary to confirm that interpretations of program implementation, aid use, and the dynamics of dependency on social assistance are based on multiple data sources and not solely on a single source of information.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Intervention Patterns and Program Acceptance Experiences

The Akit tribe in Kudap Village has interacted with various forms of government intervention programs, both in the economic and social spheres. This support comes not only from the Regional Government but also from the Central Government through the Ministry of Social Affairs. Based on information obtained in the research, one form of support from the Ministry of Social Affairs is the construction of a permanent meeting hall for customary interests and joint community activities. The presence of this facility demonstrates that government intervention in the community is not solely directed at meeting economic needs but also includes strengthening social spaces and community institutions.

Government assistance typically involves several stages designed to obtain a snapshot of community conditions and ensure a match between community needs and the type of intervention to be provided. In the initial stage, social mapping is conducted to obtain a picture of the community situation, encompassing social, economic, health, cultural, demographic, and other relevant issues. This mapping serves as the basis for understanding community characteristics before further interventions are designed.

The next stage is an initial assessment, which provides an in-depth analysis of the social mapping results. At this stage, attention is focused on needs deemed more crucial and requiring intervention. This process is then followed by a feasibility study to assess community conditions, existing needs, and the suitability of recipient characteristics to the planned form of assistance. The results of this study are then presented to Regional and National Workshops for discussion with relevant agencies and *leading sectors* involved in the empowerment program. This series demonstrates that, at the design level, government interventions have mechanisms for identifying needs and verifying them before distributing aid to the community.

In addition to the construction of shared facilities, the Akit Tribe in Kudap Village also received a number of forms of assistance aimed at strengthening their livelihoods. These include fishing nets, egg-laying hens, and a pig farming program currently under development. These three forms of assistance differ in nature, but are all aimed at providing economic opportunities for the community. Distribution at the regional level generally begins with a community proposal, followed by field verification to assess the recipient's condition and stated needs. Following the verification process, government agencies determine the appropriate form of assistance before it is distributed through the Social Services Agency or relevant technical agencies.

The experience of the Akit community in Kudap Village demonstrates two main forms of government intervention. First, social and institutional interventions, such as the provision of a meeting hall as a shared space for customary purposes. Second, interventions aimed at strengthening the economy through the provision of assets or means of production. Although procedurally, this assistance has gone through the stages of mapping, exploration, verification, and determining the form of intervention, experience at the community level shows that the assistance does not always result in the utilization and sustainability of activities as expected. Findings regarding these conditions are important for further examining how

communities experience, manage, and respond to the various forms of intervention they have received.

4.1 The Dynamics of *Welfare Dependency* and the Limitations of *Community Agency*

The environmental conditions in which the Akit community lives in Kudap Village provide ample opportunity for the development of various livelihoods. The area is located in a marine environment with potential for capture fisheries, and some community members make fishing their primary occupation. However, not all members are intensively involved in this activity. Others engage in fishing intermittently, providing it as a supplementary source of income. This situation indicates that the potential of aquatic resources has become an integral part of community life, but its utilization as a basis for livelihoods has not been evenly distributed.

In addition to capture fisheries, the surrounding area also offers opportunities for developing aquaculture businesses. However, developing these activities requires relatively substantial capital and production facilities. Meanwhile, other local assets are evident in commodities such as coconuts, areca nuts, and mangroves. Some of these resources have been utilized by the community, while others have not been optimally developed as a source of livelihood.

The problem identified was not simply a lack of resources, but also limitations in converting available resources into value-added economic activities. Observations also indicated room for expanding household economic activities through job diversification. Certain periods of time are relatively unproductive, including for women, whose activities are largely related to domestic work and casual economic activities.

This situation can actually create space for developing productive household-scale activities. Fisheries, for example, don't have to stop at catching fish; they offer the potential to be developed into various processed products. Similarly, coconuts, areca nuts, and other local commodities can be developed through simple processing to generate added value. This potential is crucial because the community has long experience interacting with the aquatic environment. They have lived in the area for decades and have lived their lives in the area for generations.

Intergenerational experiences indirectly shape knowledge and skills related to fishing activities and the use of local resources. This knowledge and experience capital can actually form the basis for developing new economic activities. The question is how this knowledge and experience can be converted into productive capacity that can support improved household livelihoods. In interviews, the issue of capital frequently arose when people discussed the possibility of developing economic activities. Limited capital was seen as a barrier to starting or expanding a business. However, at the same time, this situation demonstrates the potential for strengthening economic initiatives on a smaller scale. Developing value-added products does not always require large investments. Simple processing initiatives that utilize existing resources can be an initial step in building business experience and provide evidence of productive activity that can serve as a basis for obtaining support and mentoring in subsequent business stages.

The local government also expressed its views on this issue. The Head of the Meranti Islands Regency Social Services Department observed that poverty alleviation efforts in this community are faced not only with limited economic resources but also with mindsets and work habits, which he believes have not yet developed optimally. In this view, some of the assistance provided actually has the potential to be developed into productive economic activities, but in practice, some assistance is not sustainable and produces limited economic output. This statement provides a government perspective on the gap between the provision of assistance and the recipients' ability to develop that assistance independently.

Field findings reveal complex dynamics beyond the success or failure of aid. On the one hand, communities possess local resources, experience, knowledge, and opportunities for livelihood diversification. On the other hand, some of this potential has not yet developed into sustainable economic initiatives, and there is still a tendency to place external capital as the primary prerequisite for initiating productive activities. In this context, *welfare dependency* can be seen as a process where external support becomes increasingly dominant in shaping expectations for economic development, while the community's capacity to initiate and develop internal resources is not yet fully developed.

The existing situation also indicates that *community agency* has not yet fully developed in managing development interventions. Limited *agency* does not mean that communities lack the capacity or potential for development. Rather, field findings demonstrate the existence of various assets that can serve as the foundation for empowerment. The problem lies in the suboptimal process of connecting assets, knowledge, initiatives, and external support into economic activities that can be

sustainably managed by the communities themselves. The challenge of empowerment is not simply providing assistance, but creating the conditions that enable communities to transform their assets into the capacity to act.

4.2 Implementation Gaps and the Need for Empowerment Reorientation

Field findings indicate that the challenges in implementing empowerment programs lie not solely in the type of assistance provided, but also in the post-intervention mentoring mechanisms. One particularly prominent limitation is the lack of intensive and ongoing monitoring through community-level facilitators. This is related to budget constraints for providing mentors, so monitoring program progress relies heavily on the agency's capacity to conduct regular field visits. This obstacle is compounded by the community's relative distance from the center of government, requiring a travel time of approximately five hours via a combination of land and water. This distance and accessibility limit the intensity of interaction between program implementers and the community, particularly in identifying issues that arise after assistance is received.

Judging from its suitability to local conditions, the assistance provided does not entirely reflect a mismatch with the community's potential. Assistance in the form of fishing nets, for example, clearly relates to the local environment, which is located in a water area with potential for capture fisheries. Similarly, developing a livestock business can essentially be an alternative way to diversify livelihoods. However, assistance with laying hens presents issues related to the environmental conditions of settlements located along waterfronts. When high tide occurs, rising water levels can affect the conditions of the rearing areas and ultimately hamper the sustainability of the business. These findings suggest that program suitability should not be assessed solely on the basis of economic potential, but also consider the micro-ecological characteristics and technical conditions that influence the community's ability to manage the assistance.

Meanwhile, the pig livestock assistance demonstrated a more complex deliberation process prior to program implementation. The local Social Services Agency considered the potential for social issues to arise with people outside the community. These considerations were then reviewed through a field verification process. The verification results indicated that the community's residential area was relatively homogeneous, leading to the approval of the assistance. The program is still in its early stages of implementation, so its results and sustainability cannot yet be adequately assessed. This is important to note because the success of an empowerment intervention cannot always be determined immediately after assistance is provided; rather, it takes time to observe how the assets are utilized, developed, and generate economic benefits for recipient households.⁹

The implementation gap in this case is more accurately understood as the gap between **the provision of assets and the process of building capacity to manage them**. While aid may have undergone identification and verification processes and be linked to local potential, without adequate support, communities do not always receive support when facing technical, ecological, or economic challenges during the utilization phase. Regular monitoring is also necessary not only to measure whether aid has been utilized, but also to assess changes in field conditions, identify obstacles early on, and adjust interventions.

From an empowerment perspective, this situation demonstrates the need for a reorientation from an approach that places aid as the endpoint to one that makes aid the initial instrument for building capacity and independence. Facilitators play a crucial role in this process, connecting the provided assets with local knowledge, technical needs, economic opportunities, and the changing environmental conditions facing the community.¹⁰ Mentoring also allows for a gradual learning process, enabling communities to become more than just recipients of assets, but also empowered to develop, adapt, and expand their use.¹¹

The need for facilitators and ongoing monitoring can be seen as a crucial part of a strategy to reduce implementation gaps while strengthening *community agency*. Reorienting empowerment does not mean diminishing the government's role in providing support, but rather shifting the pattern of support from simply transferring aid to a process that enables communities to build

⁹ Elsera Marisa et al., "A Solution to The Dynamics of Aquaculture in the Akit Tribe in Riau Archipelago Province, Indonesia," *BIO Web of Conferences* 70 (2023): 05001, <https://doi.org/10.1051/bioconf/20237005001>.

¹⁰ Purnomo Purnomo et al., *Needs Assessment Knowledge from Facilitator of Community Empowerment Program in the Digital Era*, 2020; Alia Fibriantingtyas et al., "The Effectiveness of Facilitator's Role in Sustainable Farmer Community Empowerment," *International Journal of Agricultural Social Economics and Rural Development (Ijaserd)* 2, no. 1 (2022): 13, <https://doi.org/10.37149/ijaserd.v2i1.21711>.

¹¹ Hao Chen et al., "Assessing the Impact of Asset-Based Community Development Approach on Rural Poverty Alleviation in Ghana: The Moderating Role of Government Policies," *Sage Open* 14, no. 1 (2024): 21582440231226020, <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231226020>.

capacity to manage assets independently. With this approach, interventions can be directed toward generating learning processes, strengthening initiatives, and ultimately building more sustainable community economic independence.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Welfare Dependency as a Product of Intervention Relations, Not Community Character

The concept of *welfare dependency* is generally used in a number of studies to explain the situation where individuals or households utilize government social assistance programs as a relatively continuous source of income, rather than relying on income earned through work. One recent study by De Haan and Schreiner¹², for example, examines *welfare dependency* in relation to the continuity of welfare dependency between generations (*intergenerational transmission*). The study shows that children who grow up in families receiving assistance are more likely to depend on social assistance as adults. The mechanisms proposed include reduced stigma surrounding receiving assistance, the availability of information about welfare programs through family members, and limited access to and incentives to enter the labor market. This perspective demonstrates that dependency can occur through social processes that go beyond the individual decisions of beneficiaries.

Meanwhile, Arthur¹³ explains *welfare dependency* through two interrelated dimensions. The first dimension is economic dependency, which is the condition when an individual or household is financially dependent on government benefits or assistance. The second dimension relates to moral and psychological aspects, which in the literature on welfare dependency are often associated with changes in independence, self-confidence, and the drive to work. *Welfare dependency* is understood not only as a matter of income sources but also as a condition that can affect an individual's relationship with economic activity and capacity to build independence.¹⁴

Both perspectives provide important foundations for understanding welfare dependency, but they leave analytical gaps when applied to the context of empowering indigenous communities. In many discussions, dependency tends to be placed on the side of the beneficiaries, as if dependency were primarily a consequence of the character, choices, or behavior of the communities receiving assistance. This perspective becomes inadequate when placed in the context of empowerment programs, which involve the relationship between government, intervention design, implementation mechanisms, local conditions, and community capacity to manage assistance.

This research argues that *welfare dependency* needs to be situated within a broader relationship between **interventions and community agency** . Dependency is not always present as a pre-existing condition before a program is implemented, but in certain situations, can develop through the intervention cycle itself. This cycle encompasses how community needs and potential are defined, the types of assets or assistance selected, how assistance is distributed, the extent of mentoring, how monitoring is conducted, and the extent of space provided for community decision-making and self-initiative development.

Within this framework, the type of aid provided to communities is not a neutral instrument. Aid can have different impacts depending on its suitability to local assets, management capacity, ecological conditions, access to supporting facilities, and the existence of mentoring mechanisms. Interventions that stop at the distribution of assets without capacity building and ongoing monitoring have the potential to create a repetitive relationship between communities as recipients and the government as providers. Conversely, interventions that provide space for communities to identify assets, make choices, manage resources, and evaluate outcomes can expand *community agency* and reduce dependence on external assistance.¹⁵

¹² Monique De Haan and Ragnhild C. Schreiner, "The Intergenerational Transmission of Welfare Dependency," *The Economic Journal* 135, no. 669 (2025): 1609–40, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ej/ueaf004>.

¹³ Don Arthur, "Welfare Dependency: The History of an Idea," Parliament of Australia, 2021, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371603102_Welfare_dependency_the_history_of_an_idea.

¹⁴ Christine Corlet Walker et al., "Welfare Systems without Economic Growth: A Review of the Challenges and Next Steps for the Field," *Ecological Economics* 186 (August 2021): 107066, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2021.107066>; Christine Corlet Walker et al., "Growth Dependency in the Welfare State – An Analysis of Drivers in the UK's Adult Social Care Sector and Proposals for Change," *Ecological Economics* 220 (June 2024): 108159, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2024.108159>.

¹⁵ Euboš Kminiak et al., "Empowerment – Theory, History and Current Situation in Social Work: Literature Review," *Pomáhajúce Profesie* 7, no. 1 (2024): 5–15, <https://doi.org/10.17846/PP.2024.7.1.5-15>.

This research develops an understanding of *welfare dependency* not only as a characteristic of beneficiaries, but also as a possibility that can be formed through the relationship between program design, intervention implementation, control and monitoring mechanisms, and community agency.¹⁶ Loosening supervision and mentoring, for example, can lead to the empowerment process lacking corrective mechanisms when assistance does not proceed as planned. In such circumstances, the issue is not simply whether communities receive or utilize assistance, but whether the intervention can build capacity to sustainably manage assets after external support diminishes.

This perspective is important because it shifts attention from the question of "*why do communities depend on aid?*" to the more structural question of "how can patterns of intervention shape or limit communities' ability to be agents in the empowerment process?" This shift allows *welfare dependency* to be analyzed as a relational process involving government, communities, local assets, implementation mechanisms, and decision-making spaces. When connected to indigenous communities, this approach also opens up space to see that limited economic independence does not always indicate a lack of internal capacity, but can be related to the lack of linkage between local assets, knowledge, community initiatives, and external support in a sustainable empowerment process.

5.2 From Asset Provision to *Community Agency Strengthening*

If the primary goal of empowerment is to reduce poverty and strengthen community well-being, then interventions cannot simply stop at providing assistance or *asset provision*. While providing assets can be a starting point for economic development, the presence of assets alone does not automatically generate sustainable livelihoods. *An asset-based empowerment approach* is crucial in positioning assets not as the end result of interventions, but as resources that need to be developed through community capacity, knowledge, initiative, and decision-making abilities.¹⁷

The difference between *asset provision* and *asset-based empowerment* lies in the process that follows the provision of assets. *Asset provision* primarily focuses on providing or transferring resources to communities, while *asset-based empowerment* emphasizes how these resources can be identified, managed, developed, and linked to available economic opportunities.¹⁸ The success of an intervention is not solely measured by whether aid reaches recipients, but by the extent to which these assets are transformed into sources of livelihood and strengthen the community's capacity to develop their own lives independently.¹⁹

Findings from the Akit Tribe indicate that not all economic assistance provided results in sustainable household economic empowerment. This situation cannot be simply attributed to the failure of the government as the aid provider, especially since the intervention process essentially involved community suggestions and input. At the same time, field findings also indicate limitations in the community's capacity to optimize some of the assistance received. This situation demonstrates that successful empowerment is the result of a reciprocal relationship between the quality of the intervention and the community's ability to manage and develop available assets.²⁰

Assistance needs to be placed within the community's livelihood ecosystem. The assets provided need to be linked to the availability of local assets, community knowledge and skills, management capacity, ecological conditions, and market opportunities.²¹ This alignment is crucial because an asset that generally has economic value will not necessarily develop into a

¹⁶ Muammar Akbar Al Qhuraissy, "Community-Based Social Welfare: A Sociological Study of Local Community Organizing," *Sociuous Journal* 2, no. 6 (2025): 54–61, <https://doi.org/10.62872/t8jz5h88>.

¹⁷ Helmy Boemiya et al., "Strengthening the Village Community Empowerment Agency in Optimizing Village-Owned Enterprises in Sumenep Regency: Strengthening the Village Community Empowerment Agency in Optimizing Village-Owned Enterprises in Sumenep Regency," *Jurnal Dedication Hukum* 6, no. 1 (2026): 49–62, <https://doi.org/10.22219/jdh.v6i1.43418>.

¹⁸ Diana Dushkova and Olga Ivlieva, "Empowering Communities to Act for a Change: A Review of the Community Empowerment Programs towards Sustainability and Resilience," *Sustainability* 16, no. 19 (2024): 8700, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16198700>.

¹⁹ Handrie Kurniawan et al., "Sustainable Development Through Community Empowerment Based On Local Wisdom," *International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Technologies* 41, no. 2 (2023): 164, <https://doi.org/10.52155/ijpsat.v41.2.5719>.

²⁰ Scheba and Turok, "The Role of Institutions in Social Housing Provision."

²¹ Viola Cassetti et al., "How Can Asset-Based Approaches Reduce Inequalities? Exploring Processes of Change in England and Spain," *Health Promotion International* 39, no. 2 (2024): daae017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daae017>.

livelihood if it is not supported by adequate environmental conditions, management skills, production facilities, market access, and economic networks ²². In this regard, local assets already owned by the community should also be viewed as a starting point for empowerment, not merely as a backdrop for government programs.

This approach also positions *community agency* as a crucial element in the empowerment process. Communities are positioned not merely as recipients and users of aid, but as actors with the ability to make choices, develop assets, make decisions, solve problems, and adapt livelihood strategies to changing conditions. ²³By strengthening *community agency*, government intervention can shift from a one-way relationship to one that better enables communities to play a role in determining the direction and sustainability of programs.

Within this framework, facilitation is an integral part of asset provision. Intensive mentoring is needed not to replace the role of the community, but rather to strengthen their ability to manage assets and overcome various obstacles during the business development process. Facilitators can play a role in connecting communities with technical knowledge, market access, financing sources, and supporting institutions, as well as identifying and resolving problems when interventions do not align with field conditions. Facilitation serves as a mechanism that transforms assistance from simply receiving resources into a learning and capacity-building process.

From an empirical perspective, asset-based empowerment does not replace government assistance, but rather changes the orientation and working methods of aid. ²⁴The government still plays a crucial role in providing resources and opening access, but communities need to be positioned as actors with the space to manage and develop these resources. Ultimately, the shift from ²⁵*asset provision* to *asset-based empowerment* is not simply a matter of changing the program's form, but rather a shift in the relationship between aid, capacity, and agency. Aid becomes the starting point, local assets become the foundation, facilitation becomes the connecting link, and *community agency* becomes the force that enables these assets to develop into more sustainable livelihoods.

5.3 Reorienting Empowerment Strategies: Facilitation, Local Assets, and Independence

This discussion is not intended to imply that the current implementation of empowerment programs is flawed. Rather, this effort is aimed at strengthening program implementation to ensure its effectiveness, achieving targeted ²⁶*outputs*, and addressing the issues of poverty, underdevelopment, and limitations in meeting community needs, particularly those of the Akit Tribe, in a more sustainable manner. The Akit Tribe has the right to access various empowerment programs because their existence is part of Indonesia's social and cultural heritage and deserves space in the development process.²⁷

²² Jane South et al., "Asset Based Community Development: Co-Designing an Asset-Based Evaluation Study for Community Research," *Sage Open* 14, no. 2 (2024): 21582440241240836, <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241240836>; Marc Völker and Philippe Doneys, "Empowerment as One Sees It: Assessment of Empowerment by Women Participants of Development Projects," *Development in Practice* 31, no. 1 (2021): 125–38, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2020.1828284>.

²³ Linda Heaton et al., "Strengthening Community Empowerment Initiatives as a Route to Greater Equity: An English Case Study," *Community Development Journal* 61, no. 3 (2026): 476–94, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsae046>; Nicolina Kirby, "Strengthening Community Resilience through Participation – a Conceptual Exploration," *Environmental Sociology* 12, no. 1 (2026): 76–91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23251042.2025.2479666>.

²⁴ Liza Khairani and Hasan Sazali, "Government Contribution to Community Empowerment Based on Local Potential in Percut Village-Deli Serdang Regency," *Journal of Community Service and Empowerment* 5, no. 2 (2024): 238–46, <https://doi.org/10.22219/jcse.v5i2.32982>.

²⁵ Simon J. Armor et al., "Empowering People and Communities? The Power of Stories in Asset-Based Approaches to Health Inequalities," *SSM - Qualitative Research in Health* 9 (June 2026): 100720, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmqr.2026.100720>; Rebecca Harrison et al., "Asset-Based Community Development: Narratives, Practice, and Conditions of Possibility—A Qualitative Study With Community Practitioners," *Sage Open* 9, no. 1 (2019): 2158244018823081, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018823081>.

²⁶ Rina Marlina and Ahmad Fadillah, *Community Empowerment Models in Improving Production-Based Local Economies in Rural Areas: A Systematic Literature Review*, 1, no. 4 (2025).

²⁷ Erwin Harinurdin et al., "Community Empowerment Utilizing Open Innovation as a Sustainable Village-Owned Enterprise Strategy in Indonesia: A Systematic Literature Review," *Sustainability* 17, no. 8 (2025): 3394, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su17083394>.

Amidst changes that increasingly demand measurable processes and *outputs*, the empowerment approach that has been in place for decades needs continued support for transformation. To achieve more contextual change, reorienting the approach is a crucial first step to ensure program implementation is more adaptive to evolving situations and conditions.²⁸ A more adaptive approach can also support budget efficiency, making it more effective and aligned with the real needs of the community. Furthermore, if developed and implemented consistently, this approach has the potential to serve as a learning model for countries with relatively similar cultural characteristics, particularly in building and strengthening local communities so they are not neglected in the national development structure.

Table. Community Empowerment Program Reorientation Mechanism

Initial Conditions (Challenges)	Four Shifts in Empowerment Strategy	Expected Outcomes (Independence & Sustainability)
1. There is a sense of dependence on government assistance 2. Capacity limitations 3. Utilization of local assets is not optimal 4. Limited program monitoring and facilitation 5. The implementation gap between theory and practice	1. Beneficiaries are positioned as the main subjects of empowerment, not just program recipients. 2. Assistance is transformed into empowerment support that is oriented towards strengthening the capacity, access, knowledge, assistance and independence of the community. 3. The development of local assets is the main starting point for empowerment, while the provision of new assets is carried out selectively based on needs, management capacity, local conditions, and priority scale. 4. Each program is designed through a long-term and sustainable roadmap, so that interventions do not stop at providing short-term assistance, but have clear stages towards capacity building, livelihood development, and community independence.	1. Reduced dependence on external support, accompanied by increased community capacity to optimize internal resources. 2. Increasing community capacity, knowledge and skills in managing resources and developing livelihood activities 3. Strengthening community networks and institutions in a measurable manner, both in internal relations and in building access and partnerships with external parties. 4. Increasing community capacity in managing and developing businesses, starting from asset utilization, production management, to developing market access 5. The realization of community economic independence, which is characterized by the ability to maintain and develop livelihoods sustainably with decreasing dependence on external assistance.
Local Assets	Role of Facilitators (Village Government, Local Residents, Government)	Government Support
1. Natural resources (fisheries, mangroves, agriculture, etc.) 2. Local knowledge and community culture 3. Community skills and experience 4. Social networks and local institutions	1. Becoming a catalyst that connects the community with the government and other parties 2. Monitoring or monitoring the development of activities 3. Assist in Identifying barriers and adjustment needs 4. Social control in maintaining program continuity	1. Program policies and regulations include investment mechanisms that facilitate investors and licensing. 2. Access to programs and markets for communities 3. Access to external funding sources 4. Technical, managerial and business continuity assistance

²⁸ Ahmad Mustanir et al., “Tracing the Evolution of Community Empowerment Models in Development Planning,” *Journal of Social and Political Sciences* 28, no. 3 (2025): 400, <https://doi.org/10.22146/jsp.99202>.

Community Agency (Center for Empowerment Process)
From Resource Distribution Towards Transformation and Independence
Main pillar: assets provided to subjects or communities. Strengthened capacity, growing and developing agency, and achieving sustainable independence.

Source: Analysis of Primary Findings, 2026

The first change relates to a central condition of empowerment itself: the position of the actor. Target communities, which have tended to be positioned as objects of program intervention, are now being repositioned as the primary subjects. Their role is no longer passive recipients but involves participating in managing, determining, and developing programs according to the needs and interests of the community itself. ²⁹This position as subjects does not mean that all program responsibility is transferred to the community, but rather provides greater space for them to participate in decision-making, resource management, problem-solving, and outcome evaluation. Communities not only receive externally designed programs but also play a role in shaping the direction and sustainability of interventions.³⁰

The second shift concerns the orientation from *aid* to empowerment support. This doesn't necessarily mean changing the terminology currently used and making it seem more contextual. The term aid tends to focus on what is given and received, making program success easily perceived as the distribution of aid to recipients. In contrast, empowerment support positions interventions as part of a longer process of building capacity and independence. Support can take the form of material resources, knowledge, access, networks, institutional strengthening, or mentoring. Its value lies not solely in what is provided, but in its ability to foster learning and strengthen community capacity after the intervention.³¹

The third shift is a shift in orientation from asset provision to local asset development. Until now, every empowerment program has focused on asset allocation, with little attention paid to the development of local community assets. Each community possesses different resources, including natural resources, knowledge, skills, social networks, livelihood experiences, and local institutions. Local assets need to be positioned as the basis for determining the direction of empowerment. ³²The government does not always have to create or bring new assets into a community if existing resources can be developed. Conversely, if additional assets are needed, their procurement must be ensured to be linked to local assets, community capabilities, ecological conditions, and development opportunities.

This approach allows empowerment to shift from the logic of what can be given to the community to what can be developed together with the community. This distinction is important because providing equipment or capital without the capacity to develop and manage it risks producing assets that cease to be goods. Conversely, when interventions build on assets already known and controlled by the community, external support can serve as a reinforcement to expand existing capacity. ³³In the

²⁹ Noorhaizah Ahmad Shuhaimi et al., "Concepts and Theories of Empowerment and Competency," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 13, no. 18 (2023): Pages 173-187, <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v13-i18/19958>.

³⁰ Tatyana Kienko, "The Empowerment Approach as a Methodology for Research and Overcoming Social Issues of People, Groups, and Communities in Mutual Activities: Review and Research Framework," *Sotsiologicheskoe Obozrenie / Russian Sociological Review* 21, no. 2 (2022): 274-303, <https://doi.org/10.17323/1728-192x-2022-2-274-303>.

³¹ Abd. Rasyid et al., "The Concept of Community Empowerment versus Community Advancement: A Comparative Study in the Context of Social Development in Indonesia," *SIGn Journal of Social Science* 5, no. 2 (2025): 97-112, <https://doi.org/10.37276/sjss.v5i2.430>.

³² Hendri Hermawan Adinugraha et al., "Community Empowerment in Kebanggan Village: Asset-Based Community-Driven Development (ABCD) Approach," *IKHLAS: Journal of Lecturer and Student Service* 3, no. 1 (2024): 58-65, <https://doi.org/10.58707/ikhl.v3i1.994>.

³³ Guilherme Raj et al., "Power and Empowerment of Grassroots Innovations for Sustainability Transitions: A Review," *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions* 43 (June 2022): 375-92, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2022.04.009>.

life of the Akit Tribe, this approach means that fisheries potential, local knowledge, livelihood experiences, and the resources available in their environment need to be read as the foundation for designing subsequent interventions.³⁴

The next shift is from temporary programs to a long-term empowerment roadmap. Every intervention provided to the community as the subject needs to have a clear development direction, starting from asset identification, capacity building, utilization, business development, access expansion, and sustainability evaluation. This roadmap is crucial so that each aid or support doesn't stand alone as a project that ends after distribution, but rather becomes part of an interconnected empowerment phase. Within this framework, commitment between parties is necessary to ensure that the process doesn't stop when a specific program or budget ends.³⁵

Facilitators then become a crucial element in ensuring the sustainability of the process. The limited number and budget of facilitators, as found in the research locations, demonstrate the need for alternative, more contextual facilitation models.³⁶ One possibility is to involve local elements, including capable residents and village governments, to jointly function as agents of program sustainability. They can help connect communities with the government, monitor activity progress, identify obstacles, and communicate the need for program adjustments to relevant parties. This model is not intended to replace the role of government, but rather to shorten the gap between government intervention and the dynamics of community life at the local level.

The reorientation of empowerment strategies can be formulated through four interrelated shifts: from beneficiaries to subjects, from aid to empowerment support, from asset provision to local asset development, and from short-term interventions to sustainable processes supported by roadmaps and facilitation. These four shifts place *community agency* at the center of the empowerment process. The government maintains its role as a provider of support and access provider, while communities gain greater space and capacity to become primary managers of their resources.³⁷

Reorientation that produces independence does not mean that communities must be separated from government support. Independence is built through support that gradually reduces dependence on external interventions by strengthening the community's internal capabilities.³⁸ In reorientation, the measure of empowerment success is not simply the amount of aid distributed or the number of programs implemented, but whether the interventions are able to leave behind local capacity, knowledge, networks, and mechanisms that enable communities to continue operating after external support diminishes. At this point, empowerment can shift from simply distributing resources to a transformational process that results in economic independence and community sustainability.

6. CLOSING

This research shows that *welfare dependency* in the Akit community is not solely a matter of character or low community capacity, but can be formed through the relationship between intervention design, type of assistance, local conditions, implementation mechanisms, and limited monitoring and facilitation. Although some assistance has taken local potential into account, not all of it has developed into a sustainable livelihood source because it has not been fully supported by sustainable management capacity and mentoring. These findings emphasize the need for a shift from *asset provision* to *asset-based empowerment*. Communities need to be positioned as subjects with the space to manage and develop local assets, while the government plays a facilitator

³⁴ Wulan Kinasih et al., "Local Arts Community Empowerment Model Based on Sustainable Tourism Governance," *Frontiers in Sustainable Tourism* 5 (April 2026): 1681196, <https://doi.org/10.3389/frsut.2026.1681196>.

³⁵ Meilanny Risamasu, "From Marginalization to Mission: Akit's Indigenous Ecological Knowledge for Transformational Ecotheology," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 81, no. 1 (2025): a10076, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v81i1.10076>.

³⁶ M. Ishom et al., "The Role of Facilitators in Community Empowerment Based on Learning Communities to Improve Vocational Skills," paper presented at International Conference on Information Technology and Education (ICITE 2021), 2021, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.211210.026>.

³⁷ Willya Achmad, "The Role of Policies Made by the Government Towards Empowering Local Communities," *International Journal of Science and Society* 6, no. 2 (2024): 158–65, <https://doi.org/10.54783/ijssoc.v6i2.1120>.

³⁸ Megan Boston et al., "Community Resilience: A Multidisciplinary Exploration for Inclusive Strategies and Scalable Solutions," *Resilient Cities and Structures* 3, no. 1 (2024): 114–30, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rcns.2024.03.005>.

and liaison for support. Thus, the success of empowerment is not only measured by the distribution of assistance, but by the community's ability to transform assets into livelihood sources and strengthen *community agency*.

Indigenous community empowerment programs need to be based on mapping local assets, community capacity, ecological conditions, and market opportunities before determining the form of support. Each intervention also needs a long-term roadmap, regular monitoring, and facilitation that allows for program adjustments to address issues at the local level. Limited human resources and budget constraints can be addressed through a collaborative facilitation model involving village governments and community members who have the capacity to act as liaisons between the community and the government. With this approach, assistance does not stop at the transfer of assets, but becomes part of the process of strengthening capacity, *community agency*, and community economic independence.

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