# The Role of Non-Formal Education in Developing Social Capital for Students
## (A Study at PKBM Citra Ilmu Semarang Regency)

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**Abstract:** This study sought to answer why non-formal education is required as one of the education paths, to be implemented continuously when a variety of non-formal education programs have been run and implemented. This study explored ideas and assumptions behind the various perspectives and programs in providing services to students in developing social capital. One thing that is expected to contribute to strengthening social capital is education. Education not only includes formal education but also includes education in the broader sense that non-formal education is one of the agents of socialization for the development of social capital. Social capital is the fundamental basis to develop and improve an institution to become more advanced and more optimally in carrying out the activities contained in it. By using four cases of non-formal education-personal, social, academic and vocational skills in developing social capital for students this study analyzed social capital as a tool for students to develop their self in acquiring life skills that are able to deal with rules as an approach based on the theory of trust (trust, networks and communication). This study views social capital as an approach that allows students to have personal, social, academic and vocational skills. The structure of these life skills then influences students in doing something. Students who have become practical consciousness then, guide as agents in doing something so that, non-formal education through Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat (PKBM) keeps being implemented optimally.

**Key words:** Social capital, life skills, non-formal education, entrepreneurship programs, Community Learning Center, PKBM, students

## INTRODUCTION

Non-formal education activities provide youth and children access to out of school learning, strengthen their self-esteem and help them find a way to contribute to their community. In some cases, these activities serve as a bridge to help youth and children improve their academic skills directly so that they can reenter the formal education system.

Non-formal education activities aim at helping children and teenagers who have lost their opportunity to learn in school, go back to the formal education system. Non-formal education can also be used as an important supplement for students who are enrolled in formal schools, to realize education as an effort to improve human resources and is expected to have a relationship with employment opportunities which is influenced by some components; financial need, the advance of science and technology, socio-cultural development and society lifestyle. Non-formal education emphasizes the realization of society that is intelligent, skilled, independent, competitive and eager to learn. A study conducted by Srinivasan in the period from the 70's

to the 80's reveals that change, development and expansion of non-formal education give an appreciation and a new atmosphere to the ways of non-formal education in providing education for communities, especially for adults, including those who do not have access to formal education and those whose formal education is inadequate and is not relevant to the life and evolving situation in their environment (community). The findings of this study suggest that the education achieved by the Asian people is a demand for the participation of millions of educated adults to acquire skills that are necessary in order to compete openly in the technological society while the existing formal education institutions are not able to access things needed by the society.

A study found that there are approximately 36,000 Indonesian children aged 7-15 years, ages for elementary school whose parents work in oil palm plantations, rice fields and refineries in Sabah Malaysia untouched by elementary education. They live in settlements spread across several locations that are separate from one another, taking 3-12 h of driving to get to each settlement. Other factors that cause them to remain untouched by

education are the immigration, demographic, geographic, socio-cultural, economic and political conditions. In Hong Kong there are approximately 120,000 workers who do not have skills, most of whom did not finish junior high school (Kamil, 2010).

Bock argues that the strength of non-formal education is oriented towards needs, being flexible, cheap and fast. In addition, Kindervatter (1979) remarks that, the strengths of non-formal education include: coming from the local community, being independent, being appropriate to the needs of the local community and being transformative.

To the result of the investigation of the education reform team in the context of regional autonomy (Fasli Jalal and Supriyadi, 2001), it can be concluded that in order to serve be loved and be sought after by communities, non-formal education should be able to take what is good from what is growing in the community and then enriched with systematic touches of science and technology that are suitable for the community. Therefore, this strategy needs to be developed and implemented by non-formal education in helping to provide education to those in a community who for various reasons are not served by formal education/schools.

Previous studies discuss the role of non-formal education especially education for adults, answer the question regarding the needs of the community, discuss the role of non-formal education in building skills required to enter the working world, discuss issues and challenges for non-formal education, discuss the ease of passing non-formal education that the competency of students is questionable and discuss the flexibility of the learning process in non-formal education. Therefore, the researcher considers that non-formal education not only aims to provide a process of academic learning and skills but also, more importantly, aims to educate students to become good human beings which is essentially determined by the values, ideals or philosophy of a country, teachers, parents, communities and even the world. The researcher considers social capital very important as assets for students in engaging in non-formal education with a cultural approach.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach which aimed to investigate more deeply the process of developing social capital at PKBM (CLC) focused on the performance and condition of the development of PKBM through focus group discussion method and in-depth interviews. A qualitative approach leads to the situation and the actors without reducing the elements in it. This qualitative approach is based on Sugiyono (2011), Noeng (1996) and Chourmain (2008), that social reality is seen as something holistic (whole), complex, dynamic, full of meaning and having an interactive relationship. This study was conducted at PKBM Citra Ilmu located in Semarang Regency, Central Java Province. PKBM provides various learning and training programs such as early childhood education, Paket B (junior high school equivalency test), Paket C (senior high school equivalency test), functional literacy education, gender-responsive family education, entrepreneurship program. Sources of information include PKBM Citra Ilmu organizers, teaching staffs/tutors and students, head of division of non-formal education, community leaders and local authorities.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**PKBM Citra Ilmu Semarang Regency as a non-formal education provider:** The type of education held at Community Learning Center (PKBM) Citra Ilmu meets the needs of the local community. PKBM is directed to develop these potentials to be beneficial to the life of the community members. To be able to develop these potentials then the learning activities carried out at PKBM vary according to the needs of the community. These learning activities which are based on the needs of the community are in line with the functions that are closely related to the life of the community members. Those functions include.

As a place for the community to learn which means that it is a place for the community to gain knowledge and acquire different types of skills and functional knowledge that can be utilized appropriately in an effort to improve the quality of life of the community members. As a place where potentials that exist in the community are explored which means that PKBM is expected to be used as a place to exchange various potentials that exist in the community so as to create a dynamic synergy in terms of empowering the community itself. As a source of information in other words PKBM is a place for the community members to seek different kinds of information about various types of learning activities and functional skills that are very much needed by them. PKBM can provide information to the community members who need functional skills for their life (life skills).

As a place to exchange skills and experience for the community members with the principle of mutual learning through discussions of problems faced by them. As a gathering place for the community members who want to improve their knowledge and skills as well as for community members who need specific values. Besides

that, it can also be used as a place to hold various meetings of members of the community and the resource persons either from inside the organization or outside the organization. As a learning workshop that never stops which means that PKBM is aplace that is continuously used for teaching and learning.

PKBM as a non-formal education provider emphasizes more on its purpose that is to enable the community members to have the ability to face problems that occur in their environment. Then, they are expected to find a way to solve those problems so that, they can improve their quality and dignity of life. Thus, non-formal education is a part of the life of the community members which has its own peculiarities that distinguish it from other educational pathways.

**Actors at PKBM Citra Ilmu Semarang Regency:** PKBM as a non-formal education institution has an important role for the development of the young generation to participate in the development process that is currently running in the country. This implies that the educational process in PKBM should be able to cultivate knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of each student. In this case, the author considers that PKBM is the sub-system of a larger community system where PKBM is located in. Therefore, it must be able to contribute to the development of the community.

Efforts in achieving the goals of national education through non-formal education, especially, PKBM, depend a lot on a variety of factors including internal and external factors. One of the key factors derived from the "internal system" of PKBM is the organizers. It results from the function and role of the organizers as managers of the organization that are "the key persons" who determine the success of all activities carried out in PKBM.

**Internal factors:** Internal factors here include the organizers, tutors and compulsory learning program. Each has a vital role in PKBM, especially, at PKBM Citra Ilmu Semarang Regency in the process of developing social capital for the students.

The organizers of PKBM are a group of the local people who are chosen by the community and are responsible for the planning, implementation and development of the programs of PKBM as well as responsible for the entire implementation of the programs and for managing the assets of the institution. Those who implement the programs/activities are given the responsibility to carry out certain technical/operational activities of PKBM.

In order to achieve the vision and mission of PKBM Citra Ilmu Semarang Regency, the organizers are required

to coordinate with the community and the local institutions as well as the local authorities in every activity carried out. No less importantly, another role of the organizers is to make decisions, control the programs and is to have responsibility for the whole programs that run at PKBM Citra Ilmu.

Teaching staffs/tutors/instructors/technical resource persons, whether they are the community members or from outside the community are directly responsible for the learning or the community empowerment process within the organization. Teaching staffs have a very important function in PKBM because they interact directly with the community members who are learning and then this interaction produces outputs from the learning process at PKBM Citra Ilmu.

Students are part of the target community or of other communities who with high awareness, follow one or more learning programs provided by the organization. Without students, the activities of PKBM, obviously, cannot be carried out because they are the most important element of the teaching and learning process.

**External factors:** Support and partnership can take place because the organization follows the principle of trust. Each program is executed as good as possible so as to satisfy both those who are the targets of the programs and the providers of the programs. This satisfaction brings a positive image, trust and support for PKBM. This kind of partnership certainly has a positive impact, especially in the form of sustainability of the programs in PKBM. Limited resources owned by PKBM can be easily overcome by mutually beneficial cooperation, so that, the programs in PKBM can be implemented as good as possible. The implementation of these programs creates a positive image of PKBM Citra Ilmu both in the community and the local authorities.

The positive image that appears makes PKBM Citra ilmu recognized and involved in provincial, central and International level programs as its involvement in an event held by UNESCO that invited PKBMs from the Asia-Pacific regions or in other countries PKBM is commonly Referred to as CLC (Community Learning Centre). Besides being a place for comparison study, PKBM Citra Ilmu representing Central Java PKBM Communication Forum was also invited to provide input in the discussion in Ciputra Hotel semarang. Many suggestions were given, especially to friends from Bangladesh who planned to set up a PKBM in their country. On the other hand, friends from Thailand explained that they ran a CLC that is fully funded by their government while those from PRC stated that they had limited budget but their CLC still ran effectively. The

condition of CLC in Thailand and PRC is really helpful in enriching knowledge about CLC development. Moreover, comparison studies from different regions in Indonesia are also often directed to PKBM Citra Ilmu which is also the initiator.

**Process of developing social capital for students/community members:** In social life, togetherness, solidarity, tolerance, spirit of cooperation, ability to empathize are all social capitals. The absence of these social capitals will threaten the unity of the community and country or at least the problems that occur in an institution will be difficult to resolve. In addition, cooperation between individuals is much needed in an institution or in a social institution.

Social capital is the fundamental basis to develop and improve an institution to become more advanced and more optimally in implementing the programs contained in it. An institution including non-formal education as PKBM that is advanced and has good quality cannot be separated from the role of social capital contained therein. Utilization of the social capital to the fullest in an institution which is in this case PKBM can become the driving force to advance education services.

The process and implementation of the capital can work well if supported by networks or strong relations. Networks or relations can be optimized if the education institutions can take advantage of the social capital owned. Cooperation with other institutions to support the implementation of programs in an education institution needs to be taken into account. Cooperation is a very important element within the network itself. This is what is done by PKBM Citra Ilmu in the process of developing social capital.

PKBM Citra Ilmu is a non-formal education institution that is also engaged in the social aspect in which there are individuals who interact with each other to achieve the goals together. In the process of achieving these goals, support from networks of social relations between individuals in social capital is needed that gives benefits in the context of the management of the resources owned together. Social capital will facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefits. Social capital in the context of entrepreneurship education for community is considered the actualization of the potentials of the community as well as the result of strengthening the competencies that should be utilized in the process of implementing entrepreneurship education for the community. The success of entrepreneurship education for the community is also not out of the success of the development of the social capital in both the target group and the community. In other words, the existing social

capital needs to be nurtured and developed by strengthening the competencies of the target group. Utilization of important resources in the community allows those who are involved to engage in entrepreneurship, allows the production of goods/services to improve both in quantity and quality and ensures the continuity of the entrepreneurship education for the community. Unfortunately, the strengthening of social capital development in the entrepreneurship education for the community has not been realized by those who are involved in the entrepreneurship education. This shows an indication of the lack of networks and communication in the entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship activities. Significantly, if the entrepreneurship education is successful, new entrepreneurs who provide employment opportunities to others will appear, so that, a lot of employees will be recruited. It means that, indirectly, PKBM Citra Ilmu can reduce unemployment in addition to helping the government in developing and strengthening the country's economy.

In terms of capacity building there are three approaches used by PKBM Citra Ilmu, individualistic organizational and network approach. Individualistic approach emphasizes on the importance of the position and the role of human in development. The second approach is the organizational approach, known as institutional building which is part of the future investment that emphasizes on improving organizational performance. An organization with high performance as a description of an expected or idealized organization is characterized by a number of organizational characteristics including: offering mutual support and solidarity, strengthening self-esteem and mutual trust, improving the capacity of individuals to fight poverty, injustice and oppression through a collective action, serving as a forum for learning, promoting discussion and analysis of problems that are faced together, improving individuals participation in political process, able to lobby on the political issues that are of real interest having access to government and institutions that have influence and able to negotiate with other actors.

The third approach is to build networks and partnerships that are in line with the increasing sophistication of technology due to two reasons, namely, to share and disseminate ideas and information to be able to learn from each other as well as to integrate the experience and energy of the actors involved in order to increase their individual and collective impact. A network will be effective when it involves a partnership pattern with mutual respect and equal access to resources, the existence of common interests between individuals and between individuals and organizations, good network

management facilitated by the organization but still taking freedom into account. The concept of capacity building is more widely adopted for the sake of government or bureaucracy reform. However, it can also be applied to the development of community, through PKBM Citra Ilmu as organized efforts to improve the life of a community as well as to increase the ability to interact and develop independently in terms of human resources, facilities and infrastructures and skills. The application of the concept of capacity building for community development is geared to empower community so that they are able to fully control their life and surroundings, to identify their needs and problems and to find solutions for these problems.

In performing development efforts and optimizing the service quality of PKBM in order to improve the ability of the community to run an independent business, PKBM Citra Ilmu designs a program that is already running called entrepreneurship incubator of the community (Inkubator Kewriausahaan Masyarakat/InKam).

Entrepreneurship incubator of the community provides a program designed to foster and accelerate the success and development of a business through a set of elements including strengthening, accompaniment, independence and partnership expansion with the aim of allowing the community to have the right organizational and financial management and to become sustainable and in the end to have a positive impact that the community becomes independent and prosperous.

As the output of the entrepreneurship incubator of the community held at PKBM Citra Ilmu there are three aspects of the results of the programs that have been implemented as an educational service that can improve the economy of the independent business of the community:

**Economic aspect:** The community is able to improve their prosperity because they have the ability to run an independent business and can improve the quality of their life in everyday life. About 40% of 50 development targets are proven to be already independent with their business.

**Social aspect:**
- Development through this aspect includes
- Community empowerment who initially did not have the skills of entrepreneurship
- Reducing unemployment and dropout for some targets have decided to start a business

**Education aspect:** What the community obtains in terms of education includes:

- The community gain knowledge about entrepreneurship
- The community gains life skills from the learning process they have been engaged in that they use in running their business

This InKaM strategy has been implemented, so that, it gives positive contribution to the community including:

- Increased public participation in entrepreneurship independently so as to reduce unemployment
- By strengthening and expanding networks and partnerships, the implementation of the programs run in PKBM is no longer underestimated because the community can take part in programs implemented at PKBM Himmata
- Increasing quality of life of marginalized people so that they become a community who has the knowledge, attitudes and skills in businesses that make their life better

**Learning process for developing social capital:** A learning process that is of high quality plays a huge role in building the quality of individuals and community as well as a country in general. Non-formal institutions as a provider of young generation development are expected to increase their role in the formation of personality of students by increasing the intensity and quality of education, especially of non-formal education.

By understanding the concept and practice of social capital, a few ideas appear in order to strengthen the social capital of a country through education. In connection with the strengthening of social capital, some important ideas related to the components of social capital include: social working networks, social norms and sanctions/rewards. In the social working networks, educators and students are granted access to information. In the social norms, rules that apply to the community (both written and unwritten) are strengthened to generate positive mutual relationships, the emergence of hope for cooperation, trust and positive attitudes. Meanwhile, in terms of sanctions/rewards, students are given sanctions for violations and rewards for obedience. Maximum positive learning leads to maximum results including getting awards in the forms of skills, especially entrepreneurship skills so that students can be more independent and have life skills to live a better life.

**Social skills:** Social skills refer to the ability of individuals to communicate effectively with others both verbally and nonverbally in accordance with the

circumstances in which the communication takes place as this skill is a learned behavior. Adolescents who have social skills are able to express both their positive and negative feelings in an interpersonal relationship without hurting other's feeling. Social skills make people more willing to talk, express any feelings or problems and at the same time find the best solutions for these problems, so they, do not escape from reality and find other things that could potentially harm themselves and others.

Social skills can be defined as a competency required by a person to be able to live in harmony, to minimize the negative assumptions and to try to induce the positive assumptions from the local community. Some general aspects of social skills include: relationships with peers, self-management, academic ability, obedience to rules and putting own self in the right position.

The role of social skills is very important that it deserves a special attention from the academic authorities as the education providers. Social skills must be taught and trained as well as programmed in the classroom by tutors as a social skills-based learning. Social skills learning at a community learning center may be implemented through: the application and enforcement of regulations, role model of tutors, encouraging positive attitudes in the form of advice and warning and direct social skills learning in classrooms. Points 1-3 have been applied to many PKBMs due to the main function of a PKBM as an educational institution. However, there are still PKBMs that implement them in a small portion/not seriously in terms of building the social skills of students.

It is clearly reflected by the students at PKBM Citra Ilmu that social skills can be used as a social capital in shaping personality and in maintaining a sense of tolerance among the participants. Social skills are very important to establish the entrepreneurial spirit.

In a direct social skills learning in the classroom, it is expected that teachers are able to program social skills-based learning which is implementing a student centered approach with a large portion thus involving students actively in the learning process. Moreover, teachers are also expected to use various learning methods, for example, lecturing, discussing and questioning and answering. In addition, the use of cooperative learning models that require cooperation among students during the learning process in the classroom which is based on the Contextual Teaching Learning (CTL) that prioritizes the student's learning experiences is suitable for use in a social skills-based learning.

**Personal skills:** Personal skills refer to the ability to recognize and respond appropriately to feelings, attitudes and behaviors, motivations and desires of others. Personal skills are a managerial ability to understand, motivate and communicate with individuals and groups. Inter-personal skills as a social capital can be useful in community and students activities in terms of understanding the needs of others, communicating with others and understanding the desires or characteristics of others.

**Vocational skills:** Vocational skills are associated with certain occupations in a community. We need to realize that in reality, general skills and specific life skills including self-knowledge, rational thinking, social and academic skills as well as vocational skills do not function separately. Therefore, these skills are principally combined into one so as to become an action taken by individuals that involves physical, mental, emotional and intellectual aspects.

Vocational skills can be used as a tool to achieve national education goals. To the Act No. 20 of 2003 on national education system, it is implicitly stated that the duties and functions of the national education is to develop abilities and characters of the nation that has dignity in the context of the intellectual life of the nation which aims to develop student's potentials to become human beings who have faith in and are devoted to Almighty God, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent and to become democratic and responsible citizens.

Vocational skills refer to an attempt to bridge the gap between the curriculum/learning programs and the needs of the community instead of changing the existing curriculum. The presence of vocational skills as the bridge indicates the need for adjustments in the curriculum/learning programs that are not appropriate to the real condition of the local community. Sisdikanas (2003), life skills-based education according to Slamet (2002) should be implemented through five stages as follows.

Defined from the research results, choices of value and expert's thought about the values of their life. Information that has been obtained is used to develop vocational competencies and skills which demonstrate abilities, capabilities and skills to maintain its continuity and development in the fast changing world. Curriculum/learning program is developed based on vocational competencies and skills that have been formulated which allows it to be taught/developed to learners prepared based on the competency that has been selected. Vocational skills need to be implemented properly in order that vocational skills-based curriculum can implemented carefully. Evaluation of vocational skills needs to be designed based on the competency that has

been formulated in the second stage mentioned before. Since, the evaluation of learning is formulated based on competency, the assessment of student's learning achievements is not only in the form of a written test but also in the form of performance assessment

The results of this study examine the role of PKBM in instilling social capital in students. PKBM is managed by using the concept and perspective of Sociology (internal and external) in order to obtain the skills model of the community empowerment which is strategic and replicative as a reference model of PKBM. Based on the research results, the way PKBM Citra Ilmu is managed is inseparable from the role of the organizers as the leaders, motivators, facilitators, planners and decision makers. In addition this study reveals how PKBM Citra Ilmu plans, implements, monitors and evaluates the programs. No less importantly, it describes how PKBM Citra Ilmu builds partnership/networks.

## CONCLUSION

The role of the organizers in empowering PKBM Citra Ilmu Semarang Regency is one of the important factors of the successful management of this PKBM. This is because the organizers in leading PKBM Citra Ilmu play the role as the conceptors, planners, facilitators and decision makers. This is evident from the way the organizers PKBM Citra Ilmu lead by using three principles, namely: "Momong", "Momot" and "Momor". Being an organizer means "momong" or to be able to position ourselves as an organizer. "Momor" means an organizer must be able to approach students, tutors and other related institutions, so that access to information and complaints can be obtained and then to find the solutions of the complaints. "Momot" means an organizer of PKBM is able to maintain the integrity of the environment and to avoid any gap between the related elements. These three important principles (momong, momor and momot) are from the Javanese Philosophy, which contain very deep meanings which are held firmly by the organizers of PKBM Citra Ilmu.

## IMPLEMENTATION

In implementing its programs, PKBM Citra Ilmu builds partnerships which is an important factor of the success of PKBM in implementing programs in order that the programs implemented can be accepted by the community in this case the stakeholders (programs users), establishes coordination with the Department of Education, Youth and Sports of Semarang Regency and involves the local community leaders so that students can choose courses or programs that are appropriate to their needs.

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