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# Vertical Housing for the Poor: Case Study of Kudu Block H Rusunawa in Semarang

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## Abstract

This article presents a comprehensive analysis of Rusunawa Kudu Block H in Semarang City, Indonesia, using secondary data from reliable sources. It explores the broader goals of Simple Rental Flats (Rusunawa) within Indonesia's national housing policy, focusing on the development of inclusive and affordable urban housing for Low-Income Communities (MBR). The study highlights Semarang as a key case due to its high population density and limited land for housing.

Rusunawa Kudu is profiled as a strategic housing complex that improves living conditions for economically disadvantaged groups. Special attention is given to Block H, a recently added structure within the complex, examining its physical condition, residential use, and social development potential. The research uses a literature review and secondary data analysis, drawing on academic publications, government documents, and credible online media. However, limited public data on Block H's condition and resident demographics constrains deeper analysis. Findings show that Rusunawa Kudu plays a vital role in addressing housing needs for MBR, and the development of Block H signals the local government's commitment to expanding access to affordable housing. Nonetheless, the lack of transparency and data availability hinders effective monitoring and evaluation. The article concludes by stressing the need for better documentation and open access to public data on social housing projects. Such improvements are crucial for formulating more effective and sustainable housing and urban development policies.

## Keywords

*Rusunawa Kudu, Low-Income Communities, Social Housing.*

## A. Introduction

The continuous process of urbanization in various regions of Indonesia, particularly in major cities such as Semarang, has placed immense pressure on land availability for residential settlements. Rapid population growth in urban areas has significantly increased the demand for housing, while limited land availability remains a major challenge in meeting these needs. This situation calls for innovative solutions that not only address land constraints but also ensure efficient land use, affordability, and habitability. One relevant and strategic solution to this problem is the development of vertical housing in the form of multi-story apartment buildings. The Simple Rental Apartment (Rusunawa) is a concrete manifestation of government

housing policy specifically designed to provide decent, affordable, and sustainable housing for Low-Income Communities (MBR). Through the provision of vertical housing, it is hoped that people previously struggling to access adequate shelter can obtain safe, comfortable living spaces with access to urban facilities.

The initiative to build Rusunawa is not merely programmatic but also grounded in strong and structured legal frameworks. A key regulation underpinning the implementation of apartment building programs is the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 20 of 2011 concerning Apartment Buildings. This law comprehensively regulates various aspects related to the construction, management, utilization, and rights and obligations of apartment residents. Through this legal framework, both central and local governments have clear guidelines for designing and implementing housing provision policies, including Rusunawa, ensuring they are carried out systematically, measurably, and in accordance with principles of social justice and sustainable urban development.<sup>1</sup>

As one of the metropolitan cities experiencing rapid economic growth in Central Java Province, Semarang City is not exempt from complex urban challenges, one of which is the limited access to decent and affordable housing for Low-Income Communities (MBR). With increasing population and housing demands, the Semarang City Government recognizes the urgency of providing adequate housing alternatives for its citizens, especially those economically vulnerable. To address this challenge, the Semarang City Government has taken strategic steps through the implementation of the Simple Rental Apartment (Rusunawa) development program, intended as a medium- to long-term solution to reduce the housing backlog and support more structured settlement area management. The implementation of the Rusunawa program generally follows national policies and regulations

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<sup>1</sup> Arianto, T. (2024). Realitas budaya masyarakat urban. Yayasan Tri Edukasi Ilmiah.

on public housing provision and is supported at the local level by operational regulations to ensure effective implementation aligned with local community needs. One such regional regulation forming the legal basis for the program is Semarang City Mayor Regulation Number 7 of 2009 on Occupancy and Rental of Government-Owned Rental Houses. This regulation governs various technical and administrative aspects related to the rental process, tenant rights and obligations, and management mechanisms for rental houses managed by the city government, including simple rental apartment buildings (Rusunawa). As a tangible implementation of this policy, the Semarang City Government has built several Rusunawa complexes scattered across various city areas. One of the most prominent and strategic complexes is Rusunawa Kudu, located in Genuk Subdistrict. This location was chosen considering various factors such as land availability, accessibility to public facilities, and housing needs in the area. Rusunawa Kudu reflects the local government's concrete commitment to providing decent and affordable housing for people unable to access commercial housing.<sup>2</sup>

Rusunawa Kudu is one of the larger-scale vertical housing complexes in Semarang City, Central Java, specifically designed and built to meet the needs of decent housing for Low-Income Communities (MBR). The complex consists of several building blocks, each functioning as a simple rental housing unit with rates adjusted to tenants' economic capacity. Its existence reflects the government's efforts to overcome limited residential land in urban areas and is part of the national strategy for providing affordable and inclusive housing. In this context, analyzing one of the blocks within the Rusunawa Kudu complex, specifically Block H, is highly relevant and important to better understand various aspects related to the dynamics of life, as well as the physical and social conditions of vertical housing intended for

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<sup>2</sup> Octavionesti, A., & Mardiansjah, F. (2019). PENANGANAN PERMUKIMAN KUMUH MELALUI PEMBANGUNAN RUSUNAWA: STUDI KASUS RUSUNAWA KALIGAWA, KOTA SEMARANG. , 11, 41-56.

MBR. Block H is specifically chosen as the main focus of this study because it is one of the most recently constructed units within the Rusunawa Kudu environment, with construction recorded in 2017. Given its relatively young age compared to other blocks, Block H is considered capable of providing a more current and representative picture of the implementation of the Simple Rental Apartment program within the context of local housing policy.<sup>3</sup>

This scientific article aims to analyze the existence and role of Block H within the overall Rusunawa Kudu system, utilizing secondary data obtained from various reliable sources such as academic publications, government planning and reporting documents, and information available through online media. The study focuses on three main aspects: the background and context of Rusunawa development in general and Block H in particular; the physical and social profile of Block H; and information regarding housing conditions and resident characteristics, as far as data allows. Through this approach, this article is expected to contribute scientifically to understanding the implementation of social housing programs at the local level and their implications for the quality of life of low-income communities.

This research applies a qualitative approach focused on gaining an in-depth understanding of social phenomena through textual and documentary information. The method used is a literature review combined with secondary data analysis. The selection of this method is not arbitrary but based on considerations of the researcher's limited access, particularly in conducting direct field observations or interviews with sources or related parties. These limitations are also in line with academic assignment requirements, thus directing this research to maximize publicly available information sources.

The data sources used in this study consist of various types of publications that are publicly accessible and considered relevant to the study's focus. First, the research

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<sup>3</sup> Andiyana, A. (2022). Analisis Pasca Hunian Pada Bangunan Rusunawa.

refers to academic publications, including scientific journal articles and conference proceedings discussing topics related to Rusunawa, social housing, and urban area development dynamics in Indonesia. These publications provide important theoretical frameworks and academic discourse for understanding the background and development of national housing policies.

Second, data is also obtained from official documents and policy reports published by the government, both at the national and local levels, particularly by the Semarang City Government. These documents include information on Rusunawa development policies, housing programs for low-income communities (MBR), and statistical data related to the demographic and socio-economic conditions of urban communities, the primary target group of this program.

Third, additional information is collected from online sources, especially the official website of the Semarang City Government, particularly the Housing and Settlement Areas Service page. This site provides various information on Rusunawa programs currently being or already implemented in Semarang City, including technical building data, locations, and housing allocations for residents. Fourth, news articles and other information available online, from both national and local media, also form an important part of data collection, especially those directly discussing Rusunawa Kudu and more specifically the existence and development of Block H.

The data analysis process is conducted through several systematic stages. The first stage is the collection of relevant documents and information from these various sources. Subsequently, the collected data is carefully read and then classified based on specific categories related to the research focus, such as the concept and purpose of Rusunawa development, the general characteristics of Rusunawa Kudu, and data and information specifically related to Block H. After classification, the next stage is synthesizing the obtained information to form a comprehensive and integrated picture of the study object.

In addition, analysis is also performed by identifying patterns emerging from this information, including observable trends in Rusunawa development and potential problems that may arise in terms of policy implementation or actual field conditions. Interpretation of the findings is done by linking the analysis results with the initial objectives of the Rusunawa development program and placing them within the broader context of social housing in Indonesia, thus producing a more critical and reflective understanding of housing policies for low-income communities in urban areas.

## **B. Concept and Purpose of Rusunawa Development in Indonesia and Semarang**

The development of Simple Rental Apartments (Rusunawa) in Indonesia is fundamentally a response to rapid urbanization, especially in large urban areas. Urbanization not matched by adequate settlement planning has led to several problems, particularly concerning the limited availability of land for housing construction. As a result, low-income communities (MBR) often face significant difficulties in accessing decent and affordable housing. In this context, Rusunawa development emerges as a strategic solution designed to provide vertical housing alternatives that are not only efficient in using limited land but also meet basic livability principles. Generally, the main objective of the Rusunawa development program is to provide vertically designed housing facilities that allow for optimal space utilization in the context of limited land in urban areas.

Beyond merely providing shelter, Rusunawa is also expected to contribute meaningfully to improving the living standards of MBR by creating physically healthy, socially safe, and harmonious residential environments. Thus, Rusunawa development is not merely physical but also reflects the government's efforts to promote social welfare equity through the provision of humane and dignified housing. The legal basis for Rusunawa development is clearly stated in Republic of Indonesia Law Number 20 of 2011 on Apartment Buildings. This law explicitly regulates the implementation of

apartment buildings, including Rusunawa, and emphasizes several important objectives to be achieved through this policy. These include ensuring the realization of apartment buildings that meet habitability standards and are economically accessible to low-income communities. Additionally, apartment buildings are intended to support efforts to reduce slum areas that have grown sporadically in urban areas and serve as instruments to guide more organized, harmonious, and spatially efficient urban development. Considering this background and purpose, Rusunawa development is an integral part of the national strategy for settlement and public housing development, ultimately aiming to create inclusive, sustainable, and responsive urban environments for socially and economically vulnerable communities.<sup>4</sup>

In Semarang City, the implementation of the Simple Rental Apartment (Rusunawa) development is part of a regional policy that fundamentally aligns with national housing and settlement policy directions. However, the implementation of this program involves various adjustments tailored to local social, economic, and geographical conditions. The Semarang City Government, through the technical authority, the Housing and Settlement Areas Service (Disperkim), has designed and implemented the Rusunawa program specifically to meet housing needs for people categorized as low-income and lacking decent housing. The purpose of Rusunawa development in Semarang City not only reflects the government's commitment to providing affordable housing but also includes various strategic objectives closely related to complex urban problems. One primary goal of this program is to respond to land limitations in urban areas, which make it difficult to build affordable landed houses for Low-Income Communities (MBR).

Furthermore, Rusunawa is also intended as a decent temporary solution for residents unable to own a house, with

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<sup>4</sup> Wijayanti, S., Pandia, W., & Sutarno, H. (2019). The concept of Green Rusunawa for the urban community in Indonesia. *ASEAN Journal of Community Engagement*. <https://doi.org/10.7454/ajce.v3i2.1061>.

the hope that during their stay, tenants can improve their economic conditions and eventually afford to purchase or build their own homes. Moreover, Rusunawa development in Semarang City also has a preventive purpose: to prevent the spread of slums and reduce illegal settlements in disaster-prone areas such as riverbanks, cliffs, and water absorption zones. Rusunawa is positioned as a safer, healthier, and more orderly housing option, thereby reducing social and environmental risks caused by informal settlements. As a form of legality and operational basis for program implementation, the Semarang City Government has issued regulations in the form of Semarang City Mayor Regulation Number 7 of 2009. This regulation specifically governs the procedures for occupancy and the rental system for apartment units owned by the Semarang City Government, including criteria for prospective tenants, tenant obligations, lease duration, and other provisions related to Rusunawa facility management and utilization. The existence of this regulation is an important legal framework ensuring that Rusunawa management proceeds orderly, fairly, and sustainably, reflecting the local government's accountability in providing decent housing for all community segments.<sup>5</sup>

### C. Profile of Rusunawa Kudu

Rusunawa Kudu is one of the Simple Rental Apartment complexes located in the administrative area of Genuk Subdistrict, Semarang City, Central Java Province. The construction of this housing complex was carried out in stages to meet the needs of decent and affordable housing for Low-Income Communities (MBR), as part of the government's effort to address land limitations and population growth in urban areas. The construction of Rusunawa Kudu was funded through the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBN) allocated by the central government, with technical implementation by the Ministry of

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<sup>5</sup> Khairunisa, M., & Yuliastuti, N. (2018). PENILAIAN KUALITAS SARANA PRASARANA LINGKUNGAN DI RUSUNAWA KALIGAWA, KOTA SEMARANG. , 12, 25-36.

Public Works and Housing (PUPR). This project was conducted as a vertical housing development assistance program to the Semarang City Government.

After the completion of each construction phase, including physical structures and supporting facilities, the assets—buildings and all supporting infrastructure—were officially handed over to the Semarang City Government through a formal donation mechanism, which also includes authority for management and maintenance of the Rusunawa complex. The construction of Rusunawa Kudu began in 2013, marked by the construction of six initial blocks: Blocks A, B, C, D, E, and F. These blocks formed the initial foundation of this housing complex. Subsequently, in 2016, construction continued with the addition of Block G as part of housing facility expansion to accommodate the growing demand for affordable housing in the city. Development continued with the construction of two additional blocks: Block H, started in 2017, and Block I, completed in 2018. The construction of these two latest blocks demonstrates the continuity of the government's housing program in responding to dynamic social needs. With the completion of all block constructions, Rusunawa Kudu currently consists of a total of nine permanent building blocks on the prepared land. This complex is now one of the important elements in providing subsidized vertical housing in Semarang City and reflects the synergy between the central and local governments in delivering equitable housing solutions.<sup>6</sup>

Rusunawa Kudu, located in Semarang City, has relatively good accessibility and can be reached by the public through various transportation modes, including public transportation. One mode of transport serving the route to this area is the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Trans Semarang, particularly on the F2C corridor, which provides a stop at a location relatively close to the Rusunawa Kudu complex. The presence of a Trans Semarang stop near the rusunawa area

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<sup>6</sup> Afendi, R. (2019). STUDI PERENCANAAN ULANG STRUKTUR ATAS RUSUNAWA 2 UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH MALANG DENGAN SISTEM PRECAST C-PLUS.

facilitates access for residents and visitors without relying entirely on private vehicles. However, although public transportation is generally available, several studies and field reports reveal real challenges faced by some rusunawa residents, particularly regarding affordability of access to public facilities and workplaces scattered across various city areas. Most residents, especially those working in areas not directly connected to major public transport routes, are forced to use private vehicles, either motorcycles or cars, for daily mobility. This indicates limitations in the public transport integration system that has not yet fully met the mobility needs of rusunawa residents optimally.

To support comfort and functionality in the residential environment, Rusunawa Kudu is equipped with several supporting facilities designed to meet residents' basic and social needs. Facilities available in this complex include sufficient parking areas for two- and four-wheeled vehicles, a mosque for Muslim worship, shared public toilets, and a multipurpose room usable for community activities or resident meetings. Additionally, there is a multi-purpose sports field usable for physical activities such as soccer or futsal, electrical installations reaching all housing units, and green open spaces adding aesthetic and environmental quality value. Furthermore, the management has also provided a Wastewater Treatment Plant (IPAL) to ensure a healthy environment and prevent water pollution around the area. Nevertheless, several reports indicate an urgent need to improve some existing facilities in terms of both quality and quantity. Moreover, improving a more effective and integrated transportation system aligned with residents' daily needs is an important concern requiring immediate follow-up by the authorities. Adequate public facilities and transportation access will significantly determine the success of Rusunawa Kudu as a viable and sustainable vertical housing model for low-income communities.

Overall, the Simple Rental Apartment (Rusunawa) Kudu complex in Semarang City consists of nine main building blocks, each with a varying number of floors—between four

and five floors. This variation in floor numbers reflects architectural design adapted to land conditions and spatial planning needs and is part of a strategy to optimize housing capacity available for low-income communities in the area. Regarding housing unit typology, Rusunawa Kudu provides two different unit types based on building area. The first type is a housing unit with an area of approximately 24 square meters, built between 2013 and occupying Blocks A to F. This unit type was designed considering space efficiency and basic decent housing needs at the initial stage of the rusunawa complex construction.

The second type is a larger housing unit, approximately 36 square meters, built in the subsequent period, between 2016 and 2018. These 36-square-meter units can be found in Blocks G, H, and I. The increase in building area for units in later blocks was intended as a response to the dynamics of community housing needs, particularly regarding comfort and more adequate space functionality, including the provision of two bedrooms per unit, which was previously unavailable in the 24-square-meter type. Institutionally, the operational and administrative management of Rusunawa Kudu falls under the responsibility of the Regional Technical Implementation Unit (UPTD) for Rental Apartments, part of the organizational structure of the Semarang City Government's Housing and Settlement Areas Service. The UPTD performs strategic functions in facility maintenance, distribution of units to eligible Low-Income Communities (MBR), and setting and monitoring rental fees. Based on rental fee data applicable in 2020, the rental cost for 24-square-meter units ranged from IDR 70,000 to IDR 110,000 per month. Meanwhile, for the larger 36-square-meter units, the rental fee ranged from IDR 100,000 to IDR 250,000 per month. This variation in rental fees reflects differences in facilities, space size, and possible differences in location or floor position within each block, which influence the economic value of each unit.

#### **D. Analysis of Rusunawa Kudu Block H**

Block H is one of the parts of the Simple Rental

Apartment (Rusunawa) Kudu complex located in Semarang City, known to have been constructed in 2017 as part of the local government's effort to expand housing access for low-income communities. This block consists of four floors and provides a total of 58 housing units, each with an area of 36 square meters. As a relatively new block compared to others in the same complex, Block H was initially expected to offer better physical building conditions due to its younger age and potential improvements in planning and construction compared to earlier buildings.<sup>7</sup>

However, publicly available data specifically on the physical condition of Block H is still very limited. Available information is generally general and covers the entire Rusunawa Kudu complex, not explicitly detailing each block. Some general reports on the overall physical condition of Rusunawa Kudu note several technical issues affecting resident comfort, such as damaged stair tiles, roof leaks, and suboptimal drainage systems. Although these reports do not directly identify Block H as the location of these damages, it is highly likely that similar problems are experienced by Block H, given common maintenance issues typically found in government-managed rental apartment buildings, especially in the context of limited management resources.

Meanwhile, more detailed information on the demographic or socio-economic characteristics of Block H residents is also scarce in publicly accessible sources. However, based on the general provisions and objectives of Rusunawa Kudu development, it is known that this housing complex is specifically intended for Low-Income Communities (MBR), particularly Semarang City residents who do not own private homes. This aligns with housing policies emphasizing affordable housing provision for vulnerable groups. A report published by the Semarang City Housing and Settlement Areas Service indicates that the occupancy rate of Rusunawa Kudu as a whole is relatively high. 2023 data records that all 586 units available in the

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<sup>7</sup> Andiyan, A. (2022). Analisis Pasca Hunian Pada Bangunan Rusunawa.

entire Rusunawa Kudu complex are occupied. Previously, 2022 data specifically mentioning Block H indicated that the block had a capacity of 115 units, all of which were also occupied. The discrepancy in the recorded capacity for Block H is likely due to differences in recording methodology, changes in unit management policies, or modifications in unit numbers as part of post-construction development and adjustments.

Although specific data on Block H remains minimal, some information from local media and community reports can provide situational insights into actual field conditions. One report mentioned complaints from Block H residents about leaks in the bathroom ceiling causing water seepage into the kitchen area, indicating that building maintenance issues are not limited to older blocks but can also occur in relatively new ones. This strengthens the argument that rental apartment maintenance challenges are systemic and require serious attention from management. Additionally, there are reports of informal buying, selling, or transferring of Rusunawa housing units by residents, including in Blocks E and H. Such practices not only violate the basic principle of rental apartment provision as a social facility for MBR but also reflect complex socio-economic dynamics among residents. This phenomenon suggests gaps in monitoring and regulation of housing unit usage, which should be temporary and subsidized. In financial management, the Semarang City Housing and Settlement Areas Service reported intensive efforts to improve the effectiveness of rental fee collection from Rusunawa residents. This step was taken in response to significant accumulated arrears across the Rusunawa Kudu complex. This issue indicates that financial aspects in rental apartment management are one of the critical challenges that must be sustainably addressed, especially to ensure long-term operational continuity and building maintenance.

## **E. Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of secondary data collected from various sources, it is known that Block H is one of the

housing units within the Rusunawa Kudu complex in Semarang City. Constructed in 2017, this block is part of a government program to provide decent, affordable, and adequate housing for Low-Income Communities (MBR). The housing units in Block H are designed as 36-square-meter units, totaling 58 units, each expected to meet the basic living needs of small families with economic limitations. The construction of Block H, like other blocks in the Rusunawa Kudu complex, implements national and local policies to address land limitations and housing backlogs in urban areas.

However, publicly available information specifically and in detail describing the physical condition of Block H or the social and demographic characteristics of its residents remains very limited. Available data thus far provides only a general picture and is insufficient to support truly in-depth and comprehensive analysis of governance effectiveness and the sustainability of building utilization. Some sources even indicate potential problems, particularly concerning infrastructure maintenance and administrative and social housing management. This study specifically aims to answer the question of how the profile of Rusunawa Kudu Block H can be understood through a literature review and secondary data analysis. Although this effort successfully constructed an initial information framework regarding the existence and function of the block, the findings also highlight a serious limitation in terms of transparency and public data accessibility regarding social housing projects.

This is an important concern, as the availability of accurate and easily accessible data is a primary prerequisite for evidence-based and academically and administratively accountable policy evaluation. As a follow-up to this research, it is recommended that future studies not only rely on secondary data but also integrate field research methods involving direct observation of the physical condition of Block H and its surrounding environment. In addition, in-depth interviews with residents and management parties are considered important to obtain a more holistic perspective on living experiences in the rusunawa, social dynamics among residents, and challenges faced in housing facility management and maintenance. Through this more empirical

field approach, a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of Rusunawa as a social housing solution is expected, contributing to the formulation of more responsive and sustainable housing policies in the future.

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