

# The Efforts of Tukuneno Catholic Youth in Overcoming Poverty

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## Abstract

This qualitative case study aimed to examine the contribution of Tukuneno Catholic youth in alleviating poverty and unemployment by increasing income through efforts to develop the pig farming sector. Through the development of the sector, it was expected to reduce the number of underprivileged people or distance them from the poverty trap so that it could indirectly help lessen the work of local governments in decreasing poverty. The role of religion through the Catholic Church was highly hoped as a government partner in human resource development so as efforts to solve social problems, especially poverty, can be resolved and have a positive impact on the physical and mental development of the nation and state. The Catholic Church, utilizing the Socio-Economic Development Commission of Atambua Diocese (KPSE-KA), tried to embrace Catholic youth by funding the effort until local potentials could be developed. The results of the study showed that previously unemployed young people now have side income and can open their own businesses thanks to the empowerment training conducted by KPSE-KA.

## Keywords

Youth Efforts; Empowerment; Poverty Alleviation

## INTRODUCTION

The regency of Belu-NTT, bordering the State of Timor Leste, has a majority population of dryland farmers, ranchers, and wetland or paddy farmers. From 2012 to 2019, the community has experienced the impact of climate change which resulted in low agricultural and livestock production. This is caused by erratic rainfall and prolonged heat.

To overcome the impacts of climate change, the attention of various parties is more focused on the agricultural sector, while the livestock sector is very less. When viewed from the value chain, these two aspects actually need the same attention because there are interrelationship needs with each other.

The portrait that has occurred in the last few years exemplifies efforts to increase food production which received more attention than the livestock sector. If the livestock sector gets attention, it is still limited to the category of adults and people who own livestock. This has an impact on the feeling of the dependence of

young people who postscript not go to school, drop out of school, people with disabilities, and those possessing low income who always rely on their parents. Parents will have a double burden because young people do not have the space to be able to get jobs that support their survival. The only way for young people is to find work abroad illegally and/or migrate between regions.

One of the efforts promoted by the Catholic Church through the Socio-Economic Development Commission of Atambua Diocese (KPSE-KA) is organizing youth groups to increase income through pig farming. KPSE-KA tried to fund this pig farm business, starting from making cattle sheds, breeding to provide animal feed for 6 months. The business of raising pigs in groups at residents' homes was very beneficial and important because the data obtained showed that the *se'i babi* (smoked pork) restaurant in Atambua City and the slaughterhouse require approximately 20 meat pigs every day. Even then, there were no

farmers who could supply it. Apart from that, the demand for meat pigs for the State of Timor Leste was 200 heads every month, and no one can supply. This indicates that human resources have not been properly prepared to raise pigs so that they are unable to meet market needs.

In relation to gender issues so far, the growing stigma puts women can only work to take care of the household. This situation has become a trend among rural communities. Meanwhile, manual labor is synonymous with men. For this reason, through this pig farming business, an inclusive group understanding was built on the role of duties and responsibilities. Animal husbandry activities were duty and workload for all components, both men and women, so that in its implementation, the role of women was also given space, as the livestock business can run well and produce good results for the needs of young people.

This study aimed to analyze the efforts of the Catholic Youth (OMK) of the St. Catholic Church in the Parish of St. Petrus-Tukuneno Diocese of Atambua in alleviating poverty through pig farming, where the socio-economic position of young women and men in Tukuneno was increased employing the support of a sustainable pig farming sector and strengthening Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as a driver of participation of young women and men in economic development employing the pig farming sector.

Through the development of this sector, it was hoped to reduce the number of underprivileged people or could keep them away from the poorness trap as it could indirectly help ease the work of local governments in alleviating poverty.

Empowerment through the pig farming sector carried out by the Catholic Church through KPSE-KA aimed to lift welfare level up, so that the Tukuneno Parish Church members can stay away from the deprivation trap that according to the definition of Robert Chambers (1987) in Suyanto (2013: 12), consists of the five elements, namely: 1) poverty itself, 2) physical weakness, 3) isolation, 4) vulnerability and 5) powerlessness. These five elements are often intertwined with each other as it is really dangerous and kills the life chances of a poor person or family. The role of religion through the Catholic Church was highly expected as a partner of the government in the development of Human Resources (HR) so that efforts to resolve social problems, especially poverty could be resolved and have a positive impact on development for the nation and state. The Catholic Church through the Socio-Economic Development Commission of Atambua Diocese (KPSE-KA) tried to reach out to Catholic youth by funding these efforts so as local potentials could be established.

The Catholic Church, through the Socio-Economic Development Commission (KPSE), starting at the level of the Indonesian Trustees Conference, at the diocesan level to the level of the Parish Church (Sosek), saw the problem of poverty as the injustice behind economic governance due to the weak bargaining position of local communities against the strong ideology of capital. The Catholic Church existed to defend the life rights of local people so that they are not increasingly marginalized. The KPSE-KA has collaborated with local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) whose missions are also for efforts to prevent social/humanitarian problems.

The focus area of this research study was only one parish church in the Atambua Diocese, namely the St. Petrus Tukuneno-Belu Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. This location was chosen because many underprivileged people were very worried so as empowerment was very necessary to make them get out of the poverty trap, especially in fulfilling their daily needs. The characteristics of poverty experienced by this community were structural poverty, namely due to limited access to the education sector, employment opportunities, land ownership (land) for business, politics, and low human resources. This characteristic of poverty was very concerning because underprivileged people do not have access to the above facilities.

So far, the Belu Regency Government has budgeted a lot of funds in the form of assistance programs for people in this church area such as poor rice (*Raskin*), the Indonesian Conditional Cash Transfer Programme (PKH), the Independent National Program for Community Empowerment (PNPM), People's Business Credit (KUR), assistance education, and so on, but there are still many poor people. The government assistance scheme with a "project" power is not able to effectively alleviate poverty. Through assistance in the pig farming sector carried out by the Parish Church of St. Petrus Tukuneno in the Socio-Economic Section, the number of underprivileged people could be slightly reduced, particularly young people in his pastoral area.

In addition, a study conducted by Istan (2017) found that Islam teaches to alleviate poverty through economic empowerment of the weak. Islam views human resources personally as the main agent in empowering the economy of the people. It also sees that

poverty alleviation is a collective responsibility, be it for the government, scholars, and the community itself. The empowerment model is divided into two groups; those that are structural and those that are cultural. Structural steps are more emphasized on special institutions handling them to run well. Meanwhile, the cultural step is emphasized more on individuals, both individuals who are expected to become subjects and objects of poverty alleviation and empowerment.

The problem of how to free the poor from poverty and how to empower their economic life is closely related to the problem of the use and distribution of assets. The provisions of the verses of the Al-Qur'an which talk about the property (*māl, amwāl*), 20, firstly tell orders and recommendations, whereas secondly focus on prohibitions. There are several steps taken by the Al-Qur'an in alleviating poverty and empowering the needy and poor, namely orders to work, feed, give *infaq*, issue zakat (alms), distribution of *ghanimah* and *fa'i* (treasures taken from non-Muslim's with or without war), the stipulation of inheritance law, prohibition of usury, prohibition of monopoly (*ihlikār*) and hoarding wealth (*iktināz*).

There is also research from (Sriyana & Raya, 2013) which explains the role of *Baitul Mal wat Tamwil* or simply called Community Financial Institution (BMT). Based on Islamic sharia, BMT targets or focuses on the micro-business sector that can reduce poverty in Bantul Regency, especially from aspects of the role of BMT in increasing the income of its members. The role of BMT in escalating people's income is mainly due to social activities, education, and increasing work

motivation. The existence of this BMT is indeed very suitable as a pioneer in learning and developing the Islamic economic system for the community.

Of the many existing findings, the researcher also found a way to solve the problem of poverty from the role of religion, in this case Catholicism, which is almost similar to the role of the Christian Church and Islamic teachings, where Tukuneno Catholic Young People try to alleviate poverty by raising pigs through working together with the Catholic Church in partnership with various national and international NGOs. This research would further enrich existing research, in which religion, apart from being an institution that tries to maintain the relationship between humans and the God Almighty, but also a medium attempting to be involved in the social problems of humanity.

## METHODS

The research approach was qualitative with a case study method. The research was carried out in early December 2018 until the end of January 2019. The location of this research was at the St. Petrus Tukuneno, Diocese of Atambua, Belu Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia. The technique of determining the location of the research was performed by using purposive sampling technique, namely by assigning specific characteristics under the research objectives so that it was expected to be able to answer the research problems. The focus of the research was on the efforts of Catholic Youth (OMK) Tukuneno in reducing poverty through pig farming.

The data sources were obtained by finding and specifying informants and photos

of priority program activities for poverty alleviation. The technique of deciding informants was purposive sampling. Retrieval of informants by determining specific characteristics under the objectives of the study, namely informants who are directly involved in empowerment activities in pig farming so that they can provide accurate information. Informants who were selected were determined in advance, including: KPSE-KA management staff, parish priests and assistant pastors of St. Parish Church. Petrus Tukuneno, Catholic Youth (OMK), and Tukuneno Church members.

Data collection techniques were done by documentation, archival recordings, in-depth interviews, direct observation, and focus group discussion (FGD). Documentation was taken from administrative documents, photographs, videos of empowerment activities. Archive records were taken from service records at the KPSE-KA secretariat office, organizational records such as charts and budgets, maps and charts of geographic characteristics, and survey data such as census data records. In-depth interviews were conducted by interviewing informants and Church members who were involved in empowerment activities. Direct observations and FGDs were held with KPSE-KA staff/administrators, parish priests and assistant pastors, OMKs, and the congregation.

The data validity test used the following methods: a) Credibility (degree of trust) is completed by extension of observations, increasing persistence in research, triangulation (source triangulation, technical triangulation, negative case analysis, using reference materials, holding member-check) b) Transferability (Degree of Transferability, c)

Dependability (Degree of Dependency) and d) Confirmability (Degree of Certainty). Data processing was done by checking the correctness of the data, compiling the data, implementing coding, classifying data, correcting answers to interviews that were not clear to facilitate the analysis stage (Rahardjo, 2017).

The data analysis technique was descriptive analysis in the form of a description of the efforts of OMK in alleviating poverty and an explanation of empowerment programs related to pig farming. The data analysis steps used were the Analysis Interactive Model from Miles and Huberman, namely data collection, data condensation, data presentation (data display), and conclusion or verification.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The KPSE-KA has a vision, namely "Creating marginalized communities who are empowered to fight for their human rights through services and partnerships that grow from a spirit of brotherhood" and mission of Encouraging empowerment of marginalized communities through intensive mentoring and organizing, improving service quality to marginalized communities with enthusiasm, devotion, honesty, and sincerity in the light of the Holy Spirit and encouraging regulations to fulfill the rights of marginalized people. The KPSE-KA possesses a clear hierarchical structure starting at the level of the Indonesian Trustees Conference called KPSE-KWI, which is called KPSE-Diocese at the diocesan level, and called the Parish Social Section/SSP at the parish church level.

This research was conducted in one of the pastoral areas of the Atambua Diocese, namely in the St. Petrus Tukuneno, because

there are so many underprivileged people. The characteristics of poverty experienced by this community can be seen from the phenomenon of unemployment, the large number of people dropping out of school or who do not continue their education to the upper level, low-income levels, limited living costs, and low employment structure (odd jobs).

With the presence of the KPSE, people have changed their mindset to be able to compete in their socio-economic life. Many empowerment programs share knowledge and skills so that people can manage unproductive lands. Most of the Tukuneno Church congregation only have narrow lands to be developed into the agricultural and livestock sector coupled with limited knowledge and lack of business assistance capital which keeps them poor.

By means of the pig farming program, which prioritizes the KPSE-KA and the KPSE-KA Committee in collaboration with the International NGO PLAN, the European Union and the Sanggar Suara Perempuan Foundation, the community has begun to wake up awareness in utilizing untreated land. This pig farming program is considered the most successful because many young people can raise their own piglets which are obtained from the proceeds from the breeds provided by the KPSE-KA. The profit is divided by 80%: 20%. 80% is for young people who are involved in raising pigs, while 20% is for KPSE-KA. The size of the land is one of the factors that determine the success of the development of this program because the more land is used, the more piglets that are developed.

KPSE built partnerships with various donor agencies so that priority programs could run well and under control. Institutions that

**Table 1.** The Data of Youth Involved

No.	Group	Male	Female	Total
1.	Dualaus	13	30	43
2.	Umanen	18	26	44
3.	Manumutin	10	30	40
4.	Sadi	22	26	46
5.	Naekasa	25	25	50
Total		88/(-10)	137/(-19)	223/(-29)

Source: Socio-Economic Development Commission of Atambua Diocese, 2019.

partner with KPSE Diocese Atambua include: Belu Regional Government, Regional People's Representative Assembly (DPRD) of Belu, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as MISEREOR, CRS, OXFAM-GB, ACF, WFP, KARINA, TIFA, ILO, AusAID, BAKTI, SNV, PERDAKHI and the BaKTI Foundation.

Previously, the government had assisted the community with various empowerment programs, but due to the mentoring pattern that traversed the project budget, the project ended up redundant and stalled shortly after the project's budget expired. The members of the Tukuneno Church really felt the pattern of mentoring provided by KPSE because it is based on Christian values. Church service is felt to be more devoted than the service of the government which just focused on the project. After the budget ran out and the project was finished, everything stopped. Nothing was left.

Empowerment assistance through pig farming is in accordance with the vision and mission of KPSE-KA where this Catholic Church institution seeks to create empowered marginalized communities to fight for their human rights through services and partnerships and encourage the empowerment of marginalized communities by way of intensive assistance and organization so as the rights of the people marginal can be fulfilled. The concept of empowerment carried out by KPSE-KA tries to keep people away from the deprivation trap.

In this study, researchers used the concept of empowerment formulated by Papilaya in Zubaedi (2016), namely that community empowerment is an effort to increase the dignity of people who are in poor condition until they can escape from the traps of poverty and underdevelopment. Empowerment is an effort to develop people's abilities by encouraging, motivating, raising awareness of their potential, and trying to develop that potential into concrete actions.

In this case, the Catholic Church, through KPPSE-KA, in collaboration with various national and international NGOs, is trying to empower underprivileged people by developing the pig farming sector. In its application, KPSE seeks to change the mindset of the people to develop local potentials by encouraging, motivating, raising awareness so that this potential can bring economic benefits to the people involved and to the wider community who use the products of the pig farm.

### **Efforts of Young Catholic People in Empowerment and Overview of Outcomes**

Before explaining and describing the types of empowerment activities carried out by Tukuneno Catholic youths, it is necessary to know the youth data that have been recorded by KPSE-KA staff involved in this empowerment as shown in the table 1.

However, in practice, there were youths who were absent for various reasons as the

agreed number continued to decline, such as: 2 people died from the Dualaus Group, 2 men and 4 women continued their education at the tertiary institutions from the Sadi Group, 21 others were not involved again because the location they live was far from the location of the pigpen including 5 women from the Dualaus Group; 4 men and 2 women from the Umanen group, 2 men and 8 women from the Manumutin group and the reasons for their side work caused low participation.

The remaining number of youth was then prioritized to participate in a series of empowerment activities such as program socialization and the formation of youth groups which had been implemented in 5 program target groups. The Strong Community Social Organization for Inclusive Livestock Value Chain Development (Scild) program activities were funded employing the Budget Post 611.5.1, with the aim of building an understanding of the community and youth, both men and women about the promotion of a more competitive and inclusive business climate in the field of pig farming. This agenda provided understanding and commitment to the community and young people, including parents of youth, both women and men, about the pig farming program properly and also offered an understanding of KPSE and partnerships.

In the procurement of pig breeding grants for one year at the Naekasa Group, Sadi, Dualaus, Umanen, the Manumutin Group, pig raising activities had been carried out. To improve the management system of raising pigs that is good and economically profitable, through the Scild program at the Budget Post 611.7.1, Pig Grants Aid allocated funds to Scild to youth for practice: 1) Preparation of pig pen

with the aim of introducing techniques and models of comfortable pens for cattle to youth. This activity was carried out since January-February 2017. Cages were built in groups with the size of each group according to the area of land owned by the group. KPSE facilitated all materials for building a cage. 2) Procurement of pig breeds was aimed at providing and introducing healthy and quality pig breeds according to production needs to 250 youths by distributing 75 pigs, dividing each group of 15.

Activities carried out at the time of seed procurement included: 1) The bid aimed to get vendors who have the understanding and experience in selecting pig breeds and are able to carry out every activity according to program needs. 2) Selection of pig breeds since the beginning (conditions that are considered are: the pigs are at least 2 months, have cut their teeth and tails, have a minimum livestock weight of 10 kg, and are in a healthy physical condition), purchase, and distribution stages. The distribution process was done by signing a memorandum of understanding between KPSE-KA and youth which was witnessed by the head of the local group. Every time they distributed youth cattle, they were given technical information and at the same time showed the characteristics of the types of bull, bloodstock, and meat pigs as good piglets to Youth.

There were also vaccination and treatment activities, aiming to introduce the types of vaccines and medicines to youth regarding the benefits of vaccines and medicines on livestock health. To achieve this great goal, the process of implementing this

Table 2. The Food Provision

Name	Group	Total	Price (Rp)/Kg	Total Price (Rp)
Pig Feed K2 (Grower)	Umanen & Dualaus	30	300,000	9,000,000
	Umanen & Dualaus	30	300,000	9,000,000
	Umanen, Dualaus, Sadi, Manumutin, Naekasa	75	300,000	22,500,000
	Umanen, Dualaus, Sadi, Manumutin, Naekasa	75	300,000	22,500,000
	Umanen, Dualaus, Sadi, Manumutin, Naekasa	75	300,000	22,500,000
	Umanen, Dualaus, Sadi, Manumutin, Naekasa	75	300,000	22,500,000
	Umanen, Dualaus, Sadi, Manumutin, Naekasa	60	300,000	18,000,000
	Umanen, Dualaus, Sadi, Manumutin, Naekasa	135	300,000	40,500,000
	Umanen, Dualaus, Sadi, Manumutin, Naekasa	135	300,000	40,500,000
	Umanen, Dualaus, Sadi, Manumutin, Naekasa	60	300,000	18,000,000
<b>Total</b>			750	225,000,000

Source: Socio-Economic Development Commission of Atambua Diocese, 2019.

activity was performed by means of KPSE-KA giving injection services to Research and Community Service Centre (P3M) officers from each group to accompany the KPSE-KA Field Officer to visit each Scild program of pig livestock group.

The type of vaccine given was HOC with the aim of increasing livestock resistance to HOC disease. They were also given vitamins, worm medicine, and scabies. The pigs should be supplemented with vitamins to increase the appetite, while giving worm medicine was to eradicate and prevent diseases caused by worms. Besides, scurvy medicine was also granted if there were livestock infected with scurvy.

Youth monthly meetings were held since the formation of 5 youth livestock groups. This activity was carried out twice every month, but it could dynamically change due to their needs.

The provision of pig feed is the most vital or very important means as they must eat at least twice to survive. The provision of animal feed provided by KPSE-KA was for a period of only six months after which the youths themselves cultivate the feed in their own way, either by selling livestock or foraging for food in the wild (see table 2).

Group dynamics training, Community Organizer (CO), and organizing activities were

carried out in 5 (five) Scild program locations on February 2, 2017, including the Dualaus, Sadi, Naekasa, Manumutin, and Umanen groups (see table 3).

The purpose of this training is to increase the knowledge and understanding of administrators about the organizing system and Community Organizer, as well as to improve the understanding the administrators about the methods, stages, and principles of organizing in the community.

Training on cultivating corn and cassava as well as making organic fertilizers was held in 5 (five) Scild program locations on February 4, 2017 including: the Dualaus Group, the Sadi Group, the Naekasa Group, the Manumutin Group, and the Umanen Group. This activity aimed to increase the knowledge of young people about corn, cassava, and techniques for making organic fertilizers.

Pig farming technique training was held on June 23-29, 2017, and took place in each of the target groups of the Scild program. This activity was directed to upgrade the knowledge of young people about pig breeding techniques and improve their skills.

The joint marketing training was held in Atambua and took place in the Hall floor II of the Kasih Sejahtera-Atambua Credit Union (CU) Cooperative, on August 11, 2017. The



**Table 3.** Youth Participation Percentage in Activities

Group	Total of Youth	Participant	
		Male	Female
Dualaus	15	10	5
Umanen	13	10	3
Manumutin	8	2	6
Sadi	15	10	5
Naekasa	12	7	5
Total	63/126%	39/62 %	24/38%

Source: Socio-Economic Development Commission of Atambua Diocese, 2019.

purpose of this activity was to increase young people's understanding of collective marketing, market survey techniques, and market analysis.

Village monitoring and mentoring activities were carried out every month by visiting from pen to pen by KPSE-KA staff, to closely observe the condition of livestock and youth development in the field.

The marketing activities resulted in a successful sale of 2 fattening pigs in the Raimaten Group and the Manumutin Group. Other fattening pigs were ready for sale.

The empowerment activities above have produced various very encouraging outputs and are considered quite successful because young people are trained to be responsible for the joint commitments they have chosen. They can increase their economic income thanks to this side job. The tangible results of the empowerment training were: 1) 250 young farmers (175 women and 75 men) were identified and organized into groups of pigs. 2) Civil society organizations have increased their knowledge and skills in organizing young livestock groups. 3) Civil society organizations improve their skills in encouraging the participation of young women to be equal to men by means of the economic empowerment of pig farming. 4) 2 (two) groups of young breeders accessing Micro Finance Institutions (LKM) and/or banking. 5) 250 young breeders have increased their knowledge and skills in the field of pig farming.

6) 5 (five) young livestock groups have increased their knowledge and skills in processing livestock waste into organic fertilizer. 7) 5 (five) young livestock groups have increased their knowledge of corn and cassava agriculture. 8) 5 (five) young livestock groups have the capacity and skills to access the market. 9) 5 (five) young livestock groups increase their income through the livestock sector. 10) 5 (five) cooperatives would be present with managers, namely 10 groups of young women and men. 11) 60% of young people are able to advocate for a budget to the village government. 12) A Regent Regulation (Perbub) on the involvement of young women in the village in development through the livestock sector was arranged.

## CONCLUSION

Efforts to alleviate poverty are the responsibility of all parties, including the government, private sector, social institutions, and the community itself. Cooperation is needed in synergy so that more people can be saved from the poverty trap.

The government and the private sector need to support the efforts of these Tukuneno Catholic youths by paying serious attention. In this case, the researchers expect the Animal Husbandry Department of Belu Regency to help provide feed and health vaccines so as the operational costs of the youth can be reduced.

Communities that are vulnerable to poverty need to also be involved or participate by learning to imitate the experiences gained by Tukuneno Catholic youth so that they do not fall into the poverty trap.

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