

Empowerment of Former Women Migrant Workers Based on Social Capital and Local Economic Potential

Nurotul Wafiroh¹, Dafid Slamet Setiana²

^{1,2}Yogyakarta State University

Article Info

Article history:

Received Jun, 2024

Revised Jun, 2024

Accepted Jun, 2024

Keywords:

Social Capital

Empowerment

Local Economic Potential

Former Migrant Workers

ABSTRACT

This article discusses efforts to empower women former migrant workers through an approach based on social capital and local economic potential. This research aims to identify effective empowerment strategies for women who have returned from working abroad, by utilizing their social networks and the economic resources available in their areas of origin. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with data collection through in-depth interviews, participatory observation and documentation. The research results show that social capital, such as individual and community networks, trust, and social norms, plays an important role in facilitating the process of reintegration and economic empowerment. In addition, utilizing local economic potential, such as micro and small businesses, agriculture and handicrafts, has been proven to make a significant contribution in improving the welfare and economic independence of women who are post-migrant workers. This article concludes that integrating social capital with local economic potential is an effective and sustainable strategy for empowering women as migrant workers.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



Corresponding Author:

Name: Nurotul Wafiroh, S.Pd

Institution: Yogyakarta State University, Jl. Colombo No.1, Karang Malang, Caturtunggal, Kec. Depok, Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region 55281

E-mail: nurotulwafiroh.2023@student.uny.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

Former Indonesian Migrant Worker (PMI) women still face a number of significant challenges in starting their careers again. Most of them have difficulty starting a business due to limited information and opportunities. This often leaves Migrant workers trapped in confusion looking for business ideas, marketing products online, and creating interesting social media promotional content. Therefore, initiatives to empower former Migrant workers are very important and need to involve various parties.

Law Number 18 of 2017 concerning Protection of PMI mandates that empowering PMI is an integral part of protection efforts [1]. The main aim of this empowerment is to ensure that former Migrant workers do not fall back into migrant workers, especially through non-procedural channels. Apart from that, this empowerment aims to provide skills improvement provisions for former PMI. With these provisions, they can be better prepared and reduce the risk of problems if they decide to return to work abroad [2].

Migrant workers with non-procedural departures, especially women, are very vulnerable to experiencing discrimination

and violence. Based on research by UN Women in 2021, violence experienced by women migrant workers has a serious impact, both short and long term, on their physical and mental health. The health impacts of victims of violence also include injury, unwanted pregnancy, HIV, disability, depression, or even committing acts of harm to themselves. Apart from that, survivors of violence also often face stigma and rejection from society and their families [3].

Based on data from the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection and Placement Agency (BP2MI), the number of placements of Indonesian migrant workers throughout 2023 will reach more than 274,000 people. Of this number, 56% are dominated by women migrant workers and almost 70% work in the informal sector. Every year, the number of Indonesian migrant workers returning to their areas of origin continues to increase. Until the beginning of 2024, more than 1 million migrant workers have returned with various background problems, becoming former migrant workers who have to start fighting again in their home areas [4].

In order to provide skills and support to women migrant workers, various parties, especially the government, must carry out maximum empowerment. Empowerment, training and coaching activities for former migrant workers are very necessary and will have a significant positive impact. One of them is to make them financially independent after returning to Indonesia. Examples of empowering former women migrant workers include providing special skills, training in certain fields, strengthening productive economic efforts, as well as increasing access to services and participation in development. Apart from that, encouraging their creativity by optimizing natural resources in their home areas is also very important. This approach not only helps them acquire new skills but also improves their economic and social well-being.

One non-profit organization that is active in empowering migrant workers is Migrant CARE. Through local initiatives in collaboration with village governments, as

well as collaboration between the Indonesian government (Bappenas) and the Australian government (MAMPU), the Village Community Caring for Migrant Workers (DESBUMI) was formed. DESBUMI is a multi-stakeholder initiative at the local level which aims to provide protection for migrant workers, especially women, from their village of origin. DESBUMI provides five main service programs: information services, document processing services, economic empowerment services, case complaint services, and socialization and data collection [5]. This program is a response to Law Number 18 of 2017 concerning the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers and their families. Apart from that, the Indonesian government is also developing the Productive Migrant Villages (DESMIGRATIF) program through the Ministry of Manpower, as a form of replication of DESBUMI [6]. These efforts have had a significant impact in protecting and empowering migrant workers, both before work, during work, and after returning to their homeland [7].

Empowerment of women former migrant workers who were the object of this research was carried out in the DESBUMI community in Ambulu District, Jember Regency. Ambulu District is an area with complex and diverse local economic potential. The strategic geographical location makes it easier for Ambulu residents to access various innovations in utilizing local potential to support economic activities. The local economic potential in Jember Regency is very varied, including coastal, plantation and mountain natural resources [8].

This local potential-based empowerment was carried out in the DESBUMI community in Ambulu District, which is one of the pockets of migrant workers in Jember Regency [7]. Former migrant women in Ambulu District are involved in various productive economic activities and services. The existing local economic potential provides great opportunities for empowerment efforts based on local potential. Therefore, this strong economic potential can be used as an

empowerment strategy in the DESBUMI community, so as to increase the welfare and economic independence of post-migrant women.

In addition, each community has resources and potential social capital that can be accessed and utilized by its members. Social capital in a society or community not only provides awareness and boundaries to citizens, but also contributes to meeting common needs and interests. The strength of social capital can be explained through three typologies: bonding social capital, bridging social capital, and linking social capital [9]. Social capital acts as a lubricant that smooths relationships and cooperation, enabling individuals to achieve their expectations efficiently and effectively.

Collaborative social capital generates community energy and strength, which is based on traits such as trust, norms, and inseparable networks. The results of collaborative social capital work create positive energy, including a sense of responsibility, care, honesty, cooperation, inclusiveness, mutual trust, solidarity, transparency, and feelings of safety and comfort [10]. All of these sources of energy and strength are potential resources owned by the community, which can be accessed by each individual to achieve shared hopes, interests and needs.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Women Empowerment

Chambers (1995), stated that community empowerment is an economic development concept that summarizes social values. This concept reflects a new development paradigm that is people centered, participatory, empowering, & sustainable"[11]. One part of community empowerment is women's empowerment. Women's empowerment is an effort to gain access and control over resources, economic, political, social, cultural, so that women can organize themselves and increase their self-confidence to

be able to play an active role and participate in solving problems, so that they are able to build their abilities and self-concept.

The theory regarding other stages of empowerment, namely three stages in the community empowerment process, was expressed by Randy R Wrihatnolo and Riant Nugroho Dwidjowijoto in [12] as follows :

1. Awareness stage, providing understanding regarding the right to be capable and motivating them to get out of poverty, usually this stage is carried out with assistance
2. The capacity building stage enables underprivileged communities to have the skills to take advantage of the opportunities provided by conducting training and activities that have the aim of improving life skills.
3. Empowerment Stage, the stage where the community is given opportunities according to their abilities through active and sustainable participation by giving the community a greater role according to capacity and capability as well as accommodating aspirations and being guided to carry out self-evaluation of the results of implementing previous choices.

According to Sunyoto Usman (2010), community empowerment strategies require a transformation of the role of Regional Government from initiator to facilitator. This paradigm shift is reflected in several development strategies:

1. Strengthening Institutional Capacity: Increasing and creating institutional

- capacity in terms of production, income and expenditure.
2. Increasing Community Role: Actively involving the community in development planning.
 3. Distribution of Development Results: Distributing development results from, by and for the community facilitated by the Regional Government.
 4. Increasing Human Capacity (Capacity Building): Developing human capabilities through empowerment strategies that grow from the community itself.

This empowerment strategy can be seen from three main sides:

1. Creating a Supportive Climate (Enabling): Creating an atmosphere that allows community potential to develop.
2. Strengthening Community Potential (Empowering): Strengthening the potential or power possessed by the community.
3. Social Protection (Protecting): Protecting society from unequal competition and exploitation by stronger parties [13].

Empowering former women migrant workers is a strategic initiative to improve the quality of life and awareness of those who have worked abroad. This program focuses on skills development, entrepreneurship, and active participation in empowerment activities based on local economic potential. The main aim of this

empowerment is to strengthen the capacity and awareness of women migrant workers so that they can be actively involved in economic and social activities, as well as reducing the risk of illegal recruitment, human trafficking and exploitation.

2.2 Social Capital

Bourdieu in Yustika (2006) as quoted by Erwin Martin (2007) defines social capital as an aggregate of actual or potential resources tied together to create a durable network so as to institutionalize mutually beneficial friendship (acquaintance) relationships. Coleman (1988) describes social capital as the structure of relationships between and among actors that support productive activities. Putnam put forward several institutional terms, such as trust, norms and social networks as social capital [14]. Identifies social capital as the ability that arises from the existence of trust in a community. All of these definitions lead to one thing, namely that social capital is only felt when there has been interaction with other people guided by social structures. Social capital in the form of local wisdom contained in perceptions, enthusiasm, hopes and interactions between people is one of the driving forces for increasing community empowerment in achieving individual and group or community goals. This social capital can be seen from work systems, social relationships and other social activities.

Social capital has three typologies, as well as a form of energy or strength that can optimize the potential of other capital. The typology of social capital includes social capital as a glue/bonding (social bonding), social capital as a bridge/bridge (bridging social) and social capital as a connection or access

(linking social). In the context of empowerment, social capital becomes the basic capital that makes other capital effective[9]. As a glue/binding (social bonding), this means that local wisdom values, norms and rules that exist in the community are a binder to direct the behavior of members in an effort to achieve common goals; as a container/bridge (social bridging), meaning that to achieve the goal of social bonding that has been formed it must be directed at achieving the goal (bridging) through social interactions and relationships (social linking). Thus, the potential that exists in social capital must be collaborated and synergized in the same direction in achieving group / community / organizational goals.[13].

2.3 Local Economic Potential

Economic potential is a condition of the ability of economic resources that has not been exploited, types of economic resources include capital, natural resources and human resources with all their abilities. Local economic potential shows the existence of these economic resources in a place (region and/or region). The availability of economic resources in a region and/or region, if they can be utilized properly, will influence the economic capacity of the people of that region and/or region. The good economic condition of the community is reflected in the high per capita income and purchasing power of the community. Thus, if society can exploit the potential resources it has and that exist in its area and/or area to be productive, it will be able to reduce poverty and at the same time unemployment.

Empowerment based on local economic potential is a strategy used to improve community welfare by developing the economic potential of a region or village. In this context, community economic empowerment

involves efforts to increase community access, control and participation in economic activities. The aim of this empowerment is to help people become more economically independent and have the ability to manage available resources effectively. Community economic empowerment is carried out by identifying the economic potential that exists in an area and developing appropriate strategies to increase this potential.

3. METHODS

This research uses qualitative methods referring to Fukuyama's social capital theory. Qualitative research aims to produce in-depth descriptive data about the written words, spoken utterances, or behavior of research subjects [15]. This method was chosen to understand and describe social phenomena from the subject's perspective in the context of community empowerment. Data obtained through this method is considered more in-depth because it reflects natural social phenomena. Fukuyama's social capital theory is used to explain the role of elements of social capital, such as trust, values and norms, and social networks in the process of community empowerment. This theory also explains how these elements play a role in developing social capital [14].

The research was conducted in the Migrant Workers Care Village (DESBUMI) community in Ambulu Village, Ambulu District, Jember Regency. The research object was chosen based on several considerations, namely: (1) This village has various local potentials that can be developed in community empowerment activities, (2) Ambulu Village has many former women migrant workers, and (3) Former migrant women in Ambulu Village have capital. strong social networks in the form of networks, trust, and local community values and norms. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation, to obtain a

comprehensive picture of community empowerment in the area.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Empowering women who are former migrant workers is an effort to give them the opportunity to survive after becoming migrant workers. This group often experiences complex intersectionality, so empowerment is very important. Not all returning migrants are successful and successful, many face difficulties in life after returning to their hometown. As a pillar of family welfare, women who are former migrant workers must be empowered and have sovereignty in determining and pursuing the welfare of their families.

Empowering former migrant workers is an effort to improve the quality of life and awareness of women who have worked as migrant workers, especially in developing their skills, business and participation in local economic activities. The aim of this empowerment is to increase the awareness and ability of women who are former migrant workers to actively participate in economic and social activities, as well as to reduce the risk of problems such as illegal recruitment, human trafficking and exploitation. This empowerment can be done through various means, such as training, mentoring, and facilitating access to capital through banking, as well as increasing awareness and support from relevant parties for the empowerment of women who are former migrant workers.

In an effort to increase development, including economic development, basic capital is needed. This basic capital is in the form of physical capital such as money, raw materials, the environment and labor; and social capital, namely capital contained in perceptions, enthusiasm, hopes and interactions between humans as objects and subjects of development, and religious capital, namely in the form of steadfastness in devotion and hope in God as the regulator and giver of fortune and human welfare. In every person and/or society, part of the capital potential already exists, it just requires how to

exploit it and collaborate so that it can be used to improve the quality of life.

Migrant Workers Care Village (DESBUMI) is one of the communities that is a forum for holding empowerment activities for women who are former migrant workers. In this community, women who are former migrant workers are given various forms of empowerment activities. The following activities are carried out in the DESBUMI community:

1. Skills Training: Conduct courses and workshops to improve employability and entrepreneurship skills.
2. Mentoring: Provide guidance through mentors or support groups to build confidence and business skills.
3. Access to Capital: Facilitate access to funding sources through banks and other financial institutions.
4. Awareness and Support: Increase awareness and support from the government and related organizations to encourage the overall empowerment of women ex-migrant workers.

The empowerment of women who are former migrant workers which is carried out in the Migrant Workers Care Village community is carried out with the support of social capital and the use of local potential for empowerment activities in the community. Social capital in empowering women as post-migrant workers takes the form of:

1. Community network of fellow migrant workers, both active and former.
2. Network with village governments and related agencies that focus on employment and empowerment issues
3. Civil society organization that focuses on women's issues and empowerment
4. Trust and family share the same

destiny and responsibility

5. Societal norms

Migrant workers have a very strong network ranging from active and former migrant workers. Migrant workers have communities and groups while still working abroad. This network greatly simplifies the empowerment process. Where this network can be useful as a target for consumers in their productive economic activities. With this network, marketing carried out by productive economic communities can expand abroad using a network approach among migrant workers.

Apart from that, for access to capital, a network of fellow migrant workers also has the potential to provide access to capital assistance to fellow migrant workers even though they are former. This network of fellow migrant workers can strengthen the sustainability of the community and economic efforts carried out by women who are former migrant workers. As is the case with the DESBUMI community in Jember, business actors in this community also utilize social capital in the form of networks of fellow migrant workers to become partners in selling. So the market for Desbumi MSMEs has penetrated the international market through the help of migrant workers who are still active. Products that are usually sold and entrusted to Indonesian markets abroad are various snacks and various chili sauces. This collaboration has been carried out since 2019. Even though it is on a small scale, this economic and marketing activity is considered an export activity. This is reinforced by the statement made by the head of the Jember customs branch during the socialization activities for migrant workers' luggage and consignments.

In the community, migrant workers also have trust in colleagues and friends from the same community, because they assume one fate. A sense of family emerges in the desbumi community. The members have the same goals and backgrounds. So this makes social capital in the community even greater. By having trust in one community, a sense of

responsibility and unity can be built, so that carrying out empowerment efforts can be made easier by the unity of one community. Participation in this community also influences the running of empowerment programs. Like the empowerment program in the Desbumi community, even with very minimal resources, because of the solidarity and kinship of the group members, empowerment efforts can be made easier, because they are willing and ready to work together to make the program that has been formed and determined together a success. With this, empowerment can run optimally.

Migrant workers also have network access to related agencies, starting from the initial processing of departure documents, during placement and even when they return, they are always in contact with the village government and related agencies. With social capital in the form of networks with various parties, empowerment programs receive support from various parties. So finding facilitators and programs is very easy because the community has a very wide social network. Apart from that, if the department has a program it will be very possible for the desbumi group to always be recommended as beneficiaries. This has a big impact on the sustainability of the community and group members can always increase their capacity through social capital in the form of this social network.

Empowerment carried out in this community is not only based on social capital, but also based on local economic potential. Jember Regency, which in fact is a very productive area, makes it very easy to find local potential that can be utilized as a productive economic enterprise. Collaboration and synergy with academics, practitioners in Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and related agencies means that this group can easily access information and opportunities to learn further in utilizing existing local potential. The Desbumi community in Jember has productive economic activities in the form of processing various kinds of snacks and craft products using local materials found in the

area. This productive economic activity has been going on since Desbumi was founded in 2017. The first step was collaboration with academics. This productive economic activity is strengthened by collaboration with stakeholders. Group members are given access to what they learn become their interest. And given access to capital and access to training to increase their capacity.

5. CONCLUSION



Empowerment for women who are former migrant workers is really needed. This is in accordance with the mandate of law number 18 of 2017 concerning the protection of migrant workers and their families. Under the law, former migrant workers have the right to be empowered. Empowerment for women who are former migrant workers can be carried out using the social capital

resources they have. Former migrant women have a resource base in the form of community networks of fellow migrant workers, both active and former, networks with village governments and related agencies that focus on employment and empowerment issues, civil society organizations that focus on women's issues and empowerment, trust and kinship, shared fate and support for community norms. This social capital can be used as support in empowerment programs. Apart from that, the empowerment program carried out in village communities caring for migrant workers is also based on the local economic potential that exists in the Jember Regency area. Thus, the integration of social capital with local economic potential is an effective and sustainable strategy for empowering women who are former migrant workers.

REFERENCES

- [1] Indonesian Government, "Republic of Indonesia Law NO. 18 2017 Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers," *Indonesian Government.*, 2017.
- [2] Viola Marsela Agustin, Maria Veri Diana Baun Yuel, Ariel Nethan, Ananda Dewin Ikhtiarin, and Yeyen Subandi, "United Nations Women's Efforts Against Women's Violence during the Covid-19 Pandemic (Shadow Pandemic) in Indonesia," *SOSMANIORA J. Social Sciences. and Hum.*, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 451–459, 2023, doi: 10.55123/sosmaniora.v2i4.1917.
- [3] University of Indonesia, "Collaboration between UI and UN Women to Help Women Former Migrant Workers - University of Indonesia." 2023.
- [4] BP2MI, "Data on the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers for the Period December 2023," *BP2MI Website*, p. 1, 2024, [Online]. Available: <https://bp2mi.go.id/statistik-detail/data-penempatan-dan-pelindungan-pekerja-migran-indonesia-periode-desember-2023>
- [5] Migrant CARE, "Migrant Workers Caring Village (DESBUMI)," *Migrantcare.Net*. 2019.
- [6] MAMPU-Bappenas, "Migrant CARE - MAMPU." 2017. [Online]. Available: <http://mampu.bappenas.go.id/mitra-kami/migrant-care-3/>
- [7] BP2MI, "BP2Mi | Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency," *BP2MI Website*. 2022. [Online]. Available: <https://bp2mi.go.id/>
- [8] N. Prasetyo, *Business Analysis and Its Contribution to Household Income of the Tofu Agroindustry in Pontang Village, Ambulu District, Jember Regency*. 2016.
- [9] S. Abdullah, "The Potential and Power of Social Capital in a Community," *SOCIUS J. Sociol.*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 15–20, 2013.
- [10] Y. Wihardja, "CV Behavior. Anugerah Jaya in Applying Social Capital for Business Development," *Agora*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 244–249, 2016.
- [11] A. Suhaimi, *Community Development and Empowerment*. Yogyakarta: Deepublish, 2016.
- [12] TD Fitri Febrina Anggraini, "COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROCESS IN INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT IN PEDURUNGAN KIDUL DISTRICT, SEMARANG CITY," 2020.
- [13] Suprpto, D. Rahajuni, LS Badriah, and A. Rafinda, "Model for Empowering Poor Communities Based on Social Capital and Local Economic Potential in Alleviating Poverty After the PNP Mandiri Program," no. June 2019, 2018.
- [14] F. Fukuyama, "Social Capital and Civic Society," *Democratic Phoenix*. pp. 137–167, 2010. doi: 10.1017/cbo9780511610073.011.
- [15] LJ Moleong, *Qualitative research methodology*, Revised edition. Bandung: PT Teen Rosdakarya, 2018.

BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS

	<p>Nurotul Wafiroh, postgraduate student in Non-Formal Education at Yogyakarta State University. Young Community Empowerment workers and community organizers for the women community as former migrant workers. Has an interest in research on Community Education and Non-formal Education. E-mail: nurotulwafiroh.2023@student.uny.ac.id</p>
	<p>Dr. Dafid Slamet Setiana, is a lecturer in the non-formal education study program at Yogyakarta State University. Teaching ICT-based Non-formal Education courses. Has a functional position as a lecturer. Email: dafidslametsetiana@uny.ac.id</p>