

**DEVELOPING THE UNDERDEVELOPED REGION THROUGH MAMANGUN  
TUNTANG MAHAGA LEWU (PM2L) PROGRAM: A STUDY IN KATINGAN DISTRICT,  
CENTRAL KALIMANTAN**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Underdeveloped region is an area relatively less developed than other regions and has underdeveloped population. With a variety of problems experienced, it was necessary to have a program undertaken by the government to advance the development and welfare of underdeveloped regions. Through PM2L, the development in underdeveloped areas could thrive and people's welfare could be increased because PM2L served as a strategic program to address the various problems faced by the disadvantaged areas in Katingan. The purpose of this paper was to describe and analyze the implementation of the development of underdeveloped areas done through PM2L in Katingan, Central Kalimantan.*

**Keywords:** *development of underdeveloped areas, infrastructure development, community empowerment.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Development is a series of efforts made by a nation in a planned manner to promote advancement and prosperity evenly and continuously. All people including those living in rural areas should be able to enjoy the fruits of development implemented. The development undertaken until now has provided a huge advancement for the improvement of the economic, social, and public welfare. However, increasing economic development so far has not been able to improve the welfare of the people broadly and evenly, as seen from the high inequality and poverty, especially among urban and rural areas.

Inequality and injustice in the distribution of development between urban and rural areas are due to policies prioritizing development in urban areas and the centers of government, while rural areas have received less attention, resulting in the development gap between urban and rural areas leading to high poverty rate in rural areas (Joshi and Gebremedhin, 2012). Gaps in development will lead to the underdeveloped regions, causing an increase in poverty (Suryono, 2010).

In addition to impartial government's development to rural areas, other causes of gaps are (1) geographic factors, as in general, the underdeveloped areas are remote inland, hills / mountains, islands or remote islands that are difficult to reach with the transportation and communications available; (2) low human resource ability; (3) limited facilities and infrastructure such as transportation, communication, health, education, and other services; and (4) disaster-prone areas.

From the results of a study conducted by the Ministry of Regional Development (KPDT) in 2012, it was noted five factors leading to underdevelopment of a region, namely: natural disasters and conflict of 9.38%, local institutions of 4.02%, local economy of 18.35%, infrastructure of 50.81%, and human resource of 17.41%. From the data, it appears that the biggest problem for underdeveloped regions is the lack of infrastructure. Although the infrastructure is not the only effort made to spur regional development, it has an important role, both for short term and long term.

As a result of lack of transportation infrastructure, such as limited road infrastructure, rural communities still rely on water transportation as the primary means of mobility to other areas. Water transportation is so much determined by the seasons in the area—during the rainy season the water flow rises, the current is very swift, and during the dry season, the river is shallow making it difficult for people to pass through the river. Such conditions can lead to the area becoming isolated. Limited access to health services, such as limited means or place of service, the lack of quantity and type of drugs available and the lack of health personnel, is also important to consider. The low quality of human resources is a result of the limited people's access to education, such as inadequate number of textbooks, insufficient numbers of classrooms and a very low number of teachers. Execution of the functions and duties of village institutions such as village government has not run well in advancing development in the area. This is due to lack of resources by village officials. The community's economy is difficult to develop, due to marketing barriers on agricultural or plantation commodities, to other areas to get a higher price, and difficult distribution of goods, especially basic commodities because of limited infrastructure and means of transport. As a result of these problems, the development is slow, the cost of living to meet the basic needs is very high, incomes and welfare of the community is not increasing, and the high level of poverty.

To accelerate development in underdeveloped areas, special policy and strategic program are required, as well as affirmative action against underdeveloped areas whose rate of development is below the average (Kelvin 2010).

A policy of affirmative action is an action that must be done by the government, especially the local government to solve all the problems in disadvantaged areas. Such actions by Nurkse (1967) is referred to as a major boost (the Big Push), meaning accelerating regional development requires simultaneous investments in various sectors. Development is done not only economic development, but also non-economic development such as telecommunications, transportation, education, culture and motivation (Hoselitz, 1971 and Lall, 2007).

Lack of infrastructure is the biggest problem faced by underdeveloped areas, therefore infrastructure development should receive priority in determining which programs to be implemented. Therefore, one of the main priorities in the management program of underdeveloped areas is to seek to accelerate infrastructure development as it is a very important for the community, not only roads but also other facilities such as education and health, and tourism (Taye and Dada, 2012).

Through the authority of decentralization provided through regional autonomy as stipulated in the Act No. 32 of 2004 on Regional Government, the government of Katingan and Central Kalimantan create a program called *Program Memangun Tuntang Mahaga Lewu* (PM2L) or Building And Maintaining Regional / Rural Area Program (Bingan and Ibrahim, 1997). This program is formulated as an effort to accelerate the development in underdeveloped areas, in accordance with the characteristics and potential of the area. The purpose of PM2L in general is to promote development in areas that are relatively underdeveloped targeting villages. The program is a synergy between the District Government and Provincial Government, which involves the targeted community and stakeholders in its implementation from the planning, execution up to the evaluation. In accordance with the above objectives, the one that became the center of attention in PM2L is infrastructure development like construction of road infrastructure, electricity power development, and the development of education and health facilities.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

### 2.1. Approach

To discover, understand, and get a clear description of the problem studied, the researchers used qualitative research approach. No hypothesis testing performed, nor did integral measurement process but merely a study on the implementation of PM2L in Katingan. PM2L was chosen as a research topic since the policy or program development is not simply the product of the government but it is actually a reflection of an interest, attitudes, problems, needs and objectives or conditions ideal to be realized, namely providing services to people and improving welfare of the society equally.

### 2.2. Study Site

The study was conducted in Katingan, Central Kalimantan. The location chosen based on several considerations. Of the 490 underdeveloped villages in Central Kalimantan, Katingan was the region with the highest number of underdeveloped villages compared to other districts, i.e. as many as 75 villages. The study sites were in the village of Kuluk Habuhus, Sanaman Mantikei Sub-District and the village of Tumbang Mandurei, Marikit Sub-District. The villages were chosen as the study site because these two villages are disadvantaged areas and PM2L is implemented here.

### 2.3. Research Focus

Based on the problems and research objectives then the focus of the study is the implementation of PM2L in Katingan through infrastructure development as an effort to open accessibility for people in underdeveloped areas, including construction of roads, construction of quay river port, construction of power electricity, construction of educational and health facilities.

### 2.4. Source of Data and Data Collection Technique

To make it easier to obtain the desired data, multiple data sources must be set, through informants, events and documents. Then to make it easier to gather data, researchers conducted in-depth interviews, observation of the study sites and search for documents related to the research focus.

### 2.5. Data Analysis

The process of data analysis started by examining all the data that obtained through informant interviews, field notes, official documents, and drawings or photographs. According to the type of research, then the data analysis techniques used to answer the research problem was interactive data analysis presented by Milles, Huberman and Saldana (2014), done through data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Development is a process of change done in a planned and sustained manner by the government together with all members of the community to meet needs and to solve various problems in order to achieve the welfare of society as a whole. Therefore, development includes several elements, namely 1) change, on something deemed to be lacking to perfection, 2) goal, directed from, by and for the people for the sake of

preservation, welfare, and happiness of life, and 3) potential, namely the potential of people in the community itself which can then be used to support development planning (Suryono, 2010: 4). Development must be seen as a multidimensional process that includes fundamental changes in a social structure, the behavior of people, improvement of institution along with the increase of economic growth, the reduction of inequality of income distribution and poverty alleviation (Todaro and Smith, 2003).

The biggest problem being experienced by underdeveloped areas is very limited infrastructure. Non-economic development such as telecommunications, transportation, education, culture and motivation (Hoselitz, 1971) is important to spur growth and equitable development in a region. These factors have enormous influence on the development and growth of other factors, and if these factors are developed well then great hopes on the development of other factors, including the economy, may come true.

Infrastructure development in underdeveloped regions is an attempt to open access for the public to perform various activities that can support their life to get rid of underdevelopment and poverty. There are several benefits that can be gained from the development of infrastructure, namely 1) the provision of infrastructure will help rural communities to have better access, allowing the poor to get better facilities and enabling their participation in political and social life, 2) infrastructure can increase social capital, as poverty may result from behavior and mentality, so adequate infrastructure can improve the relationship between isolated communities and other communities to increase productivity, 3) infrastructure can reduce the severity due to natural disasters, economic shocks and inequity in access to infrastructure, and 4) the development of infrastructure can reduce the economic costs to be incurred by the public so as to enhance the competitiveness of the communities in the area concerned (Arsyad, *et al.*, 2011)

Infrastructure development done in underdeveloped areas in Katingan is to improve access for the public in order to increase development in underdeveloped areas. Infrastructure development presented in this section is not only roads but also other infrastructure such as education, health, and port infrastructure as well as housing assistance for the poor. Taye and Chest (2012) state that in order to increase the rural development, government should seek to accelerate infrastructure development as availability of infrastructure is a very important factor for the community. Infrastructure development in Katingan is an attempt to keep pace with the development of other areas that can be felt by all regions for the equal and equitable development. According to Chittoo and Suntoo (2012), in order to spur growth in underdeveloped villages, the government should provide clean water, access to education, transportation and health as well as the provision of social facilities for free for locals, and conduct development cooperation with the private sector related to the provision of jobs and facilities through loans from the banks. Thus, people are not overburdened in meeting their daily needs.

### 3.1. Road Infrastructure Development

In an effort to open up access for people in all regions, Katingan District Government continues to improve the construction of roads that can connect all the districts and villages. Development cannot be done all at once but simultaneously because of various problems, such as geographical conditions and the distance between remote villages, as well as budgetary of the Government of Katingan. The seriousness of the government to open up access to the community through the construction of roads in Katingan is visible from the road improvement, as in 2009 the length of road in Katingan was 654.87 kilometers and in 2012 increased to 790.00 kilometers.

With the opening of roads, people will make it easier to connect with other areas. It will also help the flow of goods and services, the cost of transportation will be cheaper, and the easy distribution of goods or materials for the development project. Although not all areas have access to roads, the distance toward areas with no road access will be shorter. This will simplify and speed up travel time and can reduce the costs to be incurred by the public.

Increased road construction in Katingan is not experienced by all regions in Katingan, especially rural areas and inland which are relatively far from the district capital. Most of the area is categorized as underdeveloped areas.

Availability of infrastructure in underdeveloped areas remains inadequate; many potholes are found on the roads, the roads are slippery and dusty, as well as badly damaged roads making it difficult for vehicles to pass. Some regions even have no passable roads. For example, when we go to the village of Tumbang

Mandurei in Sanaman Mantikei Sub-District, we can only pass through the company's street that has been operating for a long time. This is what makes the economy in the area has not been growing.

Based on data obtained through interviews, observations, and documents of PM2L activities in Katingan, it appears that the local government and the government of Central Kalimantan have not made road infrastructure as the focus in opening up isolated areas. In fact, from the results of observations at the sites, as well as interviews with informants, it has been revealed that the biggest problem faced by underdeveloped areas is very limited road infrastructure, especially roads connecting with the district capital. People find it difficult to find and meet the basic needs of everyday life, the price of goods is high, the marketing of agricultural and plantation has been constrained that the economy of the community is not developing.

Classic reason raised by the government is the low revenue. Based on the data in 2013, the total revenue of Katingan was Rp. 20.08 billion (twenty point zero eight billion) of the total district revenue of Rp 647.9 billion (six hundred and forty seven point nine billion). With budget constraints, the government must involve private participation in infrastructure development through a range of infrastructure projects. The local government must cooperate with investors for opening and building the road access. With such a regional financial circumstance, the development of infrastructure for public access in underdeveloped areas, as one of the strategic development plans of Katingan namely improving the infrastructure and facilities, remains a priority.

Infrastructure and connectivity between regions in underdeveloped areas could facilitate economic activity in the area, especially better roads so vehicles can easily pass. People can market agricultural produce and do other businesses, and a variety of resources available can be processed and developed into productive business activities that drive the local economy and public welfare.

Infrastructure has a very important role for the regions in Katingan. The opening of access through the construction of the roads will make it easier for people to do social mobilization to improve their lives, to market their products as to spur economic growth. According to Rachbini (2007), infrastructure has a very important role in the economic system, the better the state of the infrastructure of an area, the better the effects on the economy. Conversely, the relatively bad state of infrastructure, then community development and economic growth tends to slow down and even not develop at all. Therefore, infrastructure development policy can be used as a master strategy by the government, because infrastructure is the lifeblood of the economy and becomes the locomotive of economic, social, or cultural movement. Lall (2007) states infrastructure has an enormous influence in promoting development in underdeveloped regions and facilitating the mobilization.

Infrastructure development is directed to facilitate the movement of regional development activities, both economic and social development as well as for the success of implementation of the development programs. Infrastructure has a very big role to the development and progress of the region. Construction of road infrastructure will help improve the development of a region, in addition to social progress, economy, and national unity. According to Cinaj and Dhimitri (2013) improvement of road infrastructure will be able to support the socio-economic development of society and encourage the growth of other sectors in the economy, such as agriculture and livestock, in particular the development of a viable sector for the economy as well as other service sectors.

An area will be easy to achieve development if infrastructure provided supports the achievement of the programs implemented, and the vice versa if infrastructure does not support, such as no roads or limited transportation. Therefore, the development of infrastructure must become a priority to open access for the public and the government to achieve welfare and prosperity of society.

### 3.2. *Electricity Infrastructure Development*

At nightfall, people do their activities at home, no outside activities or no entertainment for residents. It was early evening at around 19:00 local time, and it was so quiet as there was no electricity. People used torches conventional lamps for lighting. They were made by the local community using coke cans or milk cans, with an axis, and filled with kerosene, people called them "*lampu tembok*", as people usually put the lights on the walls of the house. Some people had a power-generating machine used by their families. The machine worked from 19:00 pm to 22:00 pm, and then switched off and replaced with the conventional lamps or torch, unless there was a celebration or religious activities.

The electricity development in the target area has become one of the government's attentions. The role of electricity is very important, this is because this sector is supporting all economic activity, and as an infrastructure that encourages sectoral production process and community needs. To overcome these problems, the development of electricity infrastructure is done through the PM2L Solar Power (LTS) for each household. This facility is a small-scale solar power enough for a household. In 2013, the total funds spent by government on LTS was IDR 6.7088 billion. The number of LTS built as many as 587 units.

With the help of LTS, electricity can be provided free of charge to the public so the villagers no longer use the conventional lamps at nightfall.

### 3.3. *Education Infrastructure Development*

Education is one of the indicators to see the quality of human resources. Education has an extremely important role in development, because the level of education is as an indicator to see the progress of development of a region. The relatively low human resources becomes one of the problems faced by underdeveloped areas. Most people only finish elementary school education and some people cannot read and write (illiterate). One reason is the inadequate educational facilities available and the very low number of teachers.

Through the PM2L program, Katingan government continues to strive to provide educational facilities in all regions by providing various assistance to improve public education in underdeveloped areas. With the fulfillment of the education infrastructure, it is expected that the level of public education will increase. The development in the field of education conducted is:

- 1) To improve the students' reading interest, government also provided assistance in the form of libraries, with a budget of IDR 33.003 millions which including assistance atyping machine, a reading table, a reading chair, a bookshelf, and 1000 pieces of books.
- 2) To reduce the dropout rate, the government is also providing scholarships for underprivileged students through the School Operational Funds (BOS) of IDR 23.78 millions. This assistance is provided to motivate the students to go to school and to reduce dropout due to poverty.
- 3) Housing is provided for the teachers coming from different areas so they stay comfortably in the underdeveloped areas to do their tasks.

Education is a key to the development and the intelligence of the community, because education will be able to change the mindset and can improve the competitiveness of the people in the world of work. Moreover, Katingan is rich in natural resources and these resources are not managed optimally. The management would require competent human resources to keep it sustainable. Construction of educational facilities is the most important thing to improve human resources in the field of education. If the infrastructure and educational facilities have been met, affordable, and equitable, the quality of education will improve.

Infrastructure development in underdeveloped areas through PM2L, such as road, education, health and water infrastructure development, is the effort by Katingan government and Central Kalimantan government to spur the growth and development of communities in underdeveloped areas. Physically, development that has been done can give better benefits for the target community, such as the construction of roads linking to other areas, road construction in rural environment, improving people's access to education by providing houses for teachers coming from outside the area, providing village library and assistance to students through scholarships. However, economic benefits have not been perceived.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion described above, conclusion can now be drawn. Infrastructure development undertaken in underdeveloped areas through PM2L in Katingan is done through construction of roads, construction of rural environment, and construction of port in rivers, construction of Solar Power (PLTS) facility, and education development to benefit the society. The program, however, economically is still not able to provide benefit in terms of increasing the income of the people.

### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Underdeveloped region is an area relatively less developed than other regions and has underdeveloped population. The biggest problems faced by disadvantaged areas is the limited road infrastructure, therefore, we propose some recommendations, as follows:

- 1) The local government of Katingan should put the development in underdeveloped areas as a priority in its development plans so that all the problems faced by people in underdeveloped areas can be overcome to improve the welfare of the community.
- 2) In order to accelerate the development process and community development in underdeveloped areas, the government is prioritizing the development of road infrastructure, especially roads that connect regions and that go to the centers of economic activities.
- 3) The local community should be involved in formulating the development plans because the people understand more the problems experienced.
- 4) The local community should also be involved in the implementation of programs that have been defined as an attempt to open jobs for the community, so that people can get salary from the development projects to increase income for the community.

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