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Communication Strategy Evaluation of the Empowerment Program for Women Ex-Migrant Workers in Indonesia

By Moh Faidol Juddi

Abstract
Domestic migrant workers living with their employers is one of the major causes of cases of high inequality globally. To ease this problem, the Indonesian government has attempted to empower women ex-migrant workers by prohibiting them from returning to work in the domestic sector abroad. This empowerment program was implemented through the sustainability training program of the Community of Migrant Worker’s Families (KKBM) from 2017 to 2019. The government hoped that by focusing on entrepreneurship, former migrant laborers would be able to achieve financial independence. Most of them, however, decided to return to their previous jobs or to work overseas after completing the training. By using a qualitative case study method, this study sought to assess communication strategies and offer solutions; it was focused on the period from March 2019 to October 2019, after the program had ended. The results showed that the bottom-up communication strategy for the empowerment program through KKBM did not work well because the government’s communication in the program implementation was conducted vertically and one-way without fully involving women ex-migrant workers or emphasizing the program goals. In addition, the sustainability of the program was not carried out appropriately. Instead, it was only focused on low-power community organizers.

Keywords: Women ex-migrant workers, Indonesia, Empowerment program, KKBM, Communicative action

Introduction
Since the 1980s in Indonesia, becoming a migrant worker has been a tradition, with the primary motivation being to increase family income (Mulyana & Octavianti, 2018). Most Indonesian women migrant workers who go to work abroad do so due to a lack of employment opportunities in their home country. The desire to enable women migrant workers from Indonesia to work abroad has overridden some cultural barriers (Chib et al., 2014), including patriarchal ideologies and religious principles that prohibit women from working outside the home (Kirana et al., 2017).

The largest concentration of migrant laborers is on Java Island, especially in Indramayu and Cirebon Regency. In June 2019, the number was just over 10,000 (BNP2TKI, 2019, p. 4). Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, South Korea, Abu Dhabi, and several other Middle Eastern nations are the final destinations for these migrants. Some migrant Indonesian laborers work for businesses, the government, or as ship crews (BNP2TKI, 2019, p. 16). The existence of migrant workers abroad has contributed significantly to foreign monetary exchange for the country. The total of remittances to the country of origin (Indonesia) in 2019 was more than 10 billion USD per month (Anggit, 2019; Khalidi, 2018).

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The women migrant workers from Indonesia must, however, return home because their work contract has ended. Most of them have to struggle and suffer even more than before. An ex-migrant worker’s success is determined by their ability to save and invest in rice fields, houses, or venture capital. Ex-migrant workers who have not been successful have thus decided to work as domestic workers in other countries. Until mid-2019, there were 70,253 Indonesian migrant workers sent abroad, and 15.14% were on re-entry programs, indicating they had already left the country and were now looking for work abroad (BNP2TKI, 2019, p. 16; Petriella, 2019).

The Indonesian government’s efforts to reduce poverty for ex-migrant workers have been carried out through the National Agency for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (BNP2TKI) through an empowerment program run by the Migrant Worker Family Community (KKBM) (Juddi et al., 2020). KKBM is a migrant worker empowerment concept based on mutual agreement that is tailored to the needs of migrant workers. Technically, this program is performed by the Indonesian Workers Placement and Protection Service Center (BP3TKI) in each region by forming a Community Organizer (CO) consisting of ex-migrant workers and local village apparatus. The KKBM CO serves as a link between ex-migrant workers and the government, facilitating empowerment through entrepreneurship training that is more focused on providing soft skills training than money. This program was formed in 2017 and ended in 2019.

This program has spread throughout West Java’s migrant worker regional center areas, including Sukabumi, Cirebon, Kerawang, Indramayu, Garut, Purwakarta, Subang, Majalengka, Kuningan, and Sumedang. Entrepreneurship training programs have been well developed in some areas, but in others, the government’s targets have not been met. In addition to the entrepreneurship program, which is held in groups following the training, the government also provides superior products to each KKBM in any area. Of the 11 KKBM in West Java, Cirebon regency has been deemed unable to meet the target. The empowerment program focused on Kapetakan sub-district with Pegagan Kidul as an empowerment center in early 2018. This activity is concentrated in Pegagan Kidul because BT, a former Indonesian migrant worker, has a strong influence and is regarded as an opinion leader in Cirebon Regency. In addition, Kapetakan Regency is regarded as the distribution hub for Indonesian migrant workers.

Pegagan Kidul ran several empowerment programs, including waste bank training in 2015 and culinary training in 2017. Unfortunately, it was only in 2017 that this empowerment resulted in a thriving crispy fried chicken business. Empowerment in 2018 was then standardized through KKBM activities with culinary production training as the main focus. Culinary production training is determined by dialogue between the government and women ex-migrant workers, the majority of whom choose culinary training. Pegagan Kidul had some empowerment programs, including waste bank training in 2015. The training was organized within six days, with a total of 50 women ex-migrant workers divided into two sessions. Each session was further subdivided into three groups, with each group receiving training in the production of processed bread.

Cirebon Regency KKBM is also driven by other community organizers. The goal of this program is to change the behaviors and mindsets of women ex-migrant workers so that they will rise through entrepreneurship rather than returning to work in domestic jobs abroad. The government wants villagers in Kapetakan district to become participants in entrepreneurship training because it will be easier to monitor and, from the participant’s perspective, they will not have to pay fees, such as transportation costs, due to distance constraints. In addition, the government expects women ex-migrant workers to participate in entrepreneurship training for a maximum of three years in exchange.
After the training, several empowerment participants tried to make donuts. However, they could not be consistent because they prioritized agricultural activities or returned to work abroad. This happened because of the uncertainty of income in the entrepreneurial venture. The women argue that focusing on new businesses will be more draining. Some programs are also unable to develop superior products. Meanwhile, other KKBMs in West Java have produced excellent programs, such as Karawang and Majalengka, which have superior products of fried meatballs under the Devisa brand and are managed through the Migrant Workers Kiosk. In contrast, other KKBMs in West Java, such as Kuningan, are considered unable to achieve output according to the government's target. This is because the KKBM organizers were less active and more difficult to control. For instance, they did not provide regular updates regarding empowerment programs and did not even respond to follow-up from the central government.

Cirebon KKBM, on the other hand, is very active and adheres to government regulations. Many other organizations also helped to empower women ex-migrant workers in Pegagan Kidul village. Unfortunately, the government states that the Cirebon District KKBM has been unable to achieve the desired results. Therefore, this study evaluates the communication strategy for empowering women ex-migrant workers in Pegagan Kidul village through entrepreneurship training. Furthermore, this study examines why the empowerment of women ex-migrant workers in Pegagan Kidul village is not in line with the government’s goals. This study also offers solutions for empowering women ex-migrant workers with more effective strategies and processes of social transformation.

**The Concept of Empowering Indonesian Women Ex-Migrant Workers**

Women are the ones in the family who migrate because they are thought to be more suitable for domestic work (Sim, 2009). This is a sexist viewpoint wherein men are exalted above women (Martiany, 2013). As a result, women are treated unfairly, marginalized, and denied positions of power in society (Pudjiastuti, 2003). The characteristics of post-migration migrant workers can be seen in their restrained social interaction, low motivation, and resignation, and these are the types of migrant workers who need to be empowered (Abas et al., 2016; Cheng, 2021; Esses, 2021). Women’s empowerment, a process that authorizes women to control their lives and claim their rights (Wåhlin, 2017), should not just emphasize increasing status and asset ownership (Banerjee et al., 2020); rather, it should also focus on improving women’s education to increase their understanding of their rights in controlling decisions and participating in the social system (Dutta, 2014).

Most Indonesian people are ready to accept empowerment programs (Widyastuti, 2017). However, one of the barriers, especially for women ex-migrant workers, is a lack of self-confidence and shame due to feelings of personal and social inequality (Syed, 2010; Zahreddine et al., 2014). Empowerment programs should not emphasize a vertical instruction approach (Yan, 2011) that is influenced by the interests of political elites, capital, and government (Wijaya & Sirine, 2016). Instead, communication to build empowerment should be more bottom-up in nature, with the participation of the lower classes as a distinguishing feature (Dewi & Yazid, 2017). This strategy would be more effectively conducted through a group or community that emphasizes shared feelings and experiences (Dinkelman & Ranchhod, 2012; Van Der Ham et al., 2014). Women ex-migrant workers can develop self-esteem and self-improvement by connecting with other women in the same community (Turner & Maschi, 2015). The community should develop the talents of everyone in it. In addition, a community of fellow ex-migrant women workers can
interact more easily with each other and understand their own situation far better than the government can (Ngo, 2019).

The Theory of Communicative Action

This study aimed to analyze the communication strategy of the program to empower women ex-migrant workers through the Cirebon Regency KKBM. The KKBM Community Organizer designation was based on comprehensibility, normative rightness, truthfulness, nonviolence, moral feeling, and ideal role-taking. In analyzing this communication, the researcher drew upon theories of communicative action. An interaction is said to be communicative if the involved parties can agree on an action plan (Edkins & Vaughan-Williams, 2009). To acknowledge validity, any agreement reached at any point is always evaluated for intersubjectivity. Communicative action occurs because the communicant has their own “life world” with the same assumptions and background as the communicant—this is an insight that is based on shared and unquestioned beliefs. The use of language in conveying messages is emphasized, with a focus on informal, everyday language.

Methods and Materials

To understand a problem in-depth and analyze human interaction in a contextual case, a qualitative method with a case study approach is used (Creswell, 2016). Data was collected from various sources such as research results, articles, and reports from March 2019 to October 2019 after the program was implemented. This study aims to understand how effective the program was in achieving its goals and determine what worked well, and what needed improvement. Purposive open-ended observations and interviews were also used to collect data, with the following critical informant criteria: The informants (see Tables 1 and 2) were (1) residents of Pegagan Kidul village and surrounding villages in Kapetaka District, who had worked abroad as migrant workers; (2) registered as participants in the 2018 KKBM Pegagan Kidul village entrepreneurship training; and, (3) members of the committee (CO) of the Cirebon Regency KKBM (Table 2).
Table 1: Demographics of Primary Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initials</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Age (in 2019)</th>
<th>Village of Origin</th>
<th>Education level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RD</td>
<td>KKBM-CO Cirebon</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Pegagan Kidul Cirebon</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>KKBM-CO Cirebon</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Pegagan Kidul Cirebon</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT</td>
<td>KKBM-CO Cirebon</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Pegagan Kidul Cirebon</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KD</td>
<td>Ex-women migrant worker</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Pegagan Kidul Cirebon</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SN</td>
<td>Ex-women migrant worker</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Pegagan Kidul Cirebon</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DN</td>
<td>Ex-women migrant worker</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Pegagan Kidul Cirebon</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LN</td>
<td>Ex-women migrant worker</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Pegagan Kidul Cirebon</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Ex-women migrant worker</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Pegagan Kidul Cirebon</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>Ex-women migrant worker</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Pegagan Kidul Cirebon</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Demographics of Secondary Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initials</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Age (in 2019)</th>
<th>Village of Origin</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ER</td>
<td>Protection and Empowerment Section B3TKI Bandung</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Bandung</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TI</td>
<td>Protection and Empowerment Section B3TKI Bandung</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Bandung</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>Protection and Empowerment Section B3TKI Bandung</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Bandung</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>Directorate of Empowerment BNP2TKI</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Jakarta</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA</td>
<td>Directorate of Empowerment BNP2TKI</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Jakarta</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YS</td>
<td>Directorate of Empowerment BNP2TKI</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Jakarta</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YJ</td>
<td>Head of Pegagan Kidul Village</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Cirebon</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SM</td>
<td>Scholar of Universitas Padjadjaran</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Bandung</td>
<td>Doctoral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The informant number in the table above was saturated, where the data collected was adequate to draw the necessary conclusions. After the data was initially collected, it was analyzed by transcribing the interview recordings. After that, the written data was reduced and coded according to the needs of the research focus and setting. The trustworthiness, validity, and reliability of the data was proven by means of triangulation. After triangulation, member checks were carried out through data confirmation with informants by conveying several reactions from their point of view to the situation under investigation.

Results and Discussion

While working abroad, migrant workers tend to live a consumptive lifestyle of not saving money or investing for the future. Money earned while working abroad is used to build a house, pay for children’s school tuition, and meet family needs (Butt et al., 2017; Doki et al., 2018; Tarroja & Fernando, 2013). Their average income while working abroad ranges between five and eight million Rupiah, whereas their average income in their hometowns is only around 1.5 million Rupiah. It is one of the reasons why most women ex-migrant workers in Cirebon Regency decide to return to work overseas. According to government data from 2017 to 2019, the most common placement scheme for migrant workers abroad is person-to-person (P-to-P), with 55,161 people and 10,638 re-entry migrant workers. The P-to-P scheme involves the placement of migrant workers from other countries to do domestic work in employers’ homes. This is one of the factors that contribute to migrants’ difficulties abroad. More than 32% of the 1,903 migrant worker cases...
reported to the government were domestic migrant worker cases, such as unpaid wages, underpaid wages, overstaying their term, and so on (BNP2TKI, 2019, pp. 16-26).

As a result of these reported problems, the government aimed to empower women ex-migrant workers in order to reduce the number of domestic workers choosing this path. The empowerment program for women ex-migrant workers aimed to change their attitudes, opinions, and behavior through an entrepreneurial training activity in 2018. The Migrant Workers’ Family Community (KKBM) was created by the government in collaboration with a community organizer (CO) made up of women ex-migrant workers and the local government. KKBM presents a bridge between the government and ex-migrant workers, with the goal of meeting the needs of ex-migrant workers in the local area.

The government consulted with former Pegagan Kidul women migrant workers before deciding on the type of training. The type of entrepreneurship training was determined based on a mutual agreement by the government. As one informant noted:

…We only checked on their certain interest. What we tested was only up to, “Do you want to join the training, Ma’am?” Yes, they want to. “What kind of training do you want to join?” Whatever training. On average, those were their responses. Then we gave them some directions, such as “Yes, there are a lot of trainings, Ma’am.” Until finally we gave them some options, and they remained on food only, they stayed with their initial choice (TI, Personal Interview, August 19, 2019).

According to the discussion and evaluation of the previous program, ex-migrant women workers prefer culinary training because it is perceived as simple, and because there was a 2017 training participant who was successful with her crispy fried chicken business. The government decided to provide culinary training related to bread production based on these findings, and this training was even implemented at 11 other KKBM in West Java.

The entrepreneurship training was then conducted for six days. Three groups out of a total of 50 participants were arranged. Women ex-migrant workers were also trained in financial management and provided the opportunity to apply for business credit from national banks. Furthermore, after training, KKBM fully supported the program’s sustainability. Then, they made the following agreements that participants must consent to: (1) continue entrepreneurial activities as a result of the training, (2) participate in group entrepreneurial activities at any time if needed, and (3) receive a 20% incentive deduction of the 1.3 million Rupiah they receive from the government when participating in the training program. This deduction is intended as the community cash for future activity needs.

Despite this training, starting a new business is not exactly simple. Women ex-migrant workers are hesitant to leave their comfort zone due to a lack of knowledge caused by a low quality of education and work experience limited to the domestic sector. Returning to domestic work in another country seems a reasonable solution to their economic problems. Some of those who are not qualified to work abroad prefer to do activities in rice fields and shrimp ponds. Understanding their interests and needs solely through discussion was insufficient for developing an empowerment strategy because the women ex-migrant workers themselves were unsure of their needs. Furthermore, the government should investigate additional factors concerning motives, mentality, potential human resources, natural resources, and other issues that were not fully apparent during the discussion.
For the empowerment program to be effective, there are four steps that must be followed in the form of a communication strategy, namely: (1) fact-finding and feedback, (2) planning and programming, (3) communication and action, and (4) evaluating (Cutlip et al., 2000; Morissan, 2008). Initially, before developing the program plan, the government had tried to do fact-finding through a focus group discussion (FGD) to collect the participant’s aspirations before the program was conducted. However, this activity had been focused on giving the participants some options that were set up by the government, one of which was a culinary program. This activity should be conducted in two directions with questions, answers, and sharing between the government and the participants continuously (Fleming, 1998) to build mutual trust (Laska, 1974) to achieve the program goal. Hence, this effort was not able to help the government to capture the participants’ mentality, societal and natural resources that can be seen through observation and mapping.

Since domestic labor was performed by the majority of these women ex-migrant workers, they have a “what the employer says” mentality. This mentality has given women ex-migrant employees the reputation of being “lackeys,” as if they would not put in any effort if their employers did not “flog” them (R. Handayani, 2010). Because they are afraid of being reprimanded or even punished, they have gotten used to only working as much as their bosses have told them to. Since they were in the training shelter before traveling overseas, they had been conditioned to
think in this way. The Private Placement Company for Indonesian Migrant Workers concentrated exclusively on teaching language skills and physical work abilities for about 100 days (Juddi et al., 2021).

Individual mentality change cannot be accomplished in a single entrepreneurship training. It requires a gradual learning process over a long period of time (Maton, 2008). A person’s mentality is formed from abstract thoughts learned during the process of socialization since they were children (Mortimer & Simmons, 1978). Thoughts that have been deeply ingrained are not easily changed or shifted. A low mentality is also known as a “weak will” (Bhugra, 2004). In other words, even though they have been helped by a lot of money and technological facilities, this type of person with a “weak will” is still left behind because they are not mentally prepared to make changes.

An empowerment program cannot be applied to a community on the spur of the moment. The government’s efforts to transform women ex-migrant workers into entrepreneurs should prioritize instilling a sense of independence over mastering technical aspects. Changing the mindset and life habits of these women ex-migrant workers entails changing the mindset and life habits that have been ingrained in them since childhood. Before deciding on a program, in-depth research is also required to observe the condition of the women ex-migrant workers in detail, so that the programs that have been created are not in vain. The mental training of women ex-migrant workers necessitates ongoing efforts over a relatively long period of time.

Low Levels of Education among Women Ex-Migrant Workers

The emergence of a new population of the poor with the potential to send migrant workers abroad is driven by the population’s low level of education. As a result of this lack of education, people have poor mental health, limited work skills, and low self-esteem (Bappenas, 2015). Women migrant workers’ average level of education is limited to completing junior high school (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Placement of Migrant Workers Based on Education Level**

![Figure 2: Placement of Migrant Workers Based on Education Level](image.png)

*Source: (BNP2TKI, 2019, p. 6)*
Comparable to the national average education level of migrant workers, the average quality of the women ex-migrant workers’ level of education in the village of Pegagan Kidul is also mostly junior high school, and many of the others have only achieved the elementary school level (Samsuri, 2017). The level of education strongly influences the self-confidence of a person (Lirgg, 1992; Swift, 1992). It has made women ex-migrant workers in Pegagan Kidul village reluctant to carry out entrepreneurial activities. They feel ashamed when selling products.

The Motivation of Women Ex-Migrant Workers

The primary motivation of female ex-migrant workers is not to become entrepreneurs. According to feedback from training programs in 2015 and 2017, ex-migrant workers were more interested in venture capital (in the form of money) than a training program. According to Abraham Maslow (Navy, 2020; Yusrizal, 2012), humans have five levels of needs ranging from survival to social and self-development. Naturally, an individual will seek physical and safety needs before attempting to attain any greater level of needs, particularly if they do not feel wealthy and secure in the environment. The mindset of Pegagan Kidul village entrepreneurship training participants is still focused on how to earn a consistent income. Women ex-migrant workers are the breadwinners of their family’s finances. They cannot depend entirely on their husband’s low income. They must work hard to meet the daily needs of families and raise capital to send their children to work abroad. The most important thing for them is to live in the present. Their thinking is more concerned with visible conditions than with abstract concepts. Self-esteem or self-actualization through improving personal skills by attending a workshop has not yet been their concern. Their current priorities are more directed toward fulfilling short-term needs.

Mapping the Potential of Pegagan Kidul Village

Pegagan Kidul Village is located on the northern coast of Indonesia and is surrounded by farms and ponds (salt, fish, and shrimp) as well as rivers that run all the way to the Java Sea. The livelihoods of the average population are farmers and fishermen. Some of them are engaged in other business activities such as goat and catfish farming (Samsuri, 2017; Sugihman, 2018). Pegagan Kidul is located across the north coast road connecting Cirebon with the districts of Indramayu, Subang, Cikampek, and Karawang. When considering the village’s economic potential, improving the quality of iodized salt is a consistent effort. Additionally, traditional culinary endeavors with essential ingredients such as fish and shrimp, handicrafts from marine biotas such as shellfish, and handicrafts from water hyacinth can be developed in this village. However, the government must first continue its literacy efforts in order to change the mindset of the women ex-migrant workers in Pegagan Kidul.

Culinary training, such as bread production, should still be developed, but it is necessary to consider whether the raw material of the product is accessible due to the village’s remote location from the city center. Regional identification is carried out through participatory mapping of village potential to plan village development, primarily related to women ex-migrant workers, in order to improve the welfare of the community (Handayani & Cahyono, 2014). The government should develop an in-depth picture of the village areas using a village potential mapping method, which includes categorization of geographic data, demographic data, economic data, natural resources, and other data, both in terms of village conditions and compared to higher levels. This method also aids in the identification of village problems and opportunities for development (Chrisnanda, 2017).
Following the completion of the training, the government kept in touch with the women ex-migrant employees by phone and WhatsApp through the KKBM CO monitoring activities. The idea behind establishing KKBM is to create an independent community that can provide resources to women ex-migrant workers in their region as a result of managing existing potential. The government budget, which includes operational and housing costs, is only a two-year trigger. Following that, the government will only conduct remote monitoring.

The training program is only run once, and program sustainability solutions are implemented through cross-sectoral synergy programs. The government invited other organizations, such as the World Bank, West Java Bank, and the Indonesia Financial Service Authority, to continue the empowerment program. This synergy is a creative solution resulting from an inter-agency collaboration with an ongoing interest or responsibility for empowering women ex-migrant workers (Covey, 2013; Fukuyama, 2002). Moreover, Bambang Suwignyo (Nadia, 2018) explained that some aspects must be considered in the process of building a community, which includes community recovery, capacity building, local resource management, and networking development. These aspects are carried out simultaneously. Following that is the adoption process in achieving long-term conditions of periodic empowerment programs lasting one year, five years, or ten years. Steps and periodic targets must be well-defined from the start of the empowerment program, which focuses on some aspects related to social, economic, and environmental justice. Unfortunately, this program was not optimal because it randomly targeted women ex-migrant workers rather than focusing on women ex-migrant workers who actually participated in the training program. This effort would not improve the abilities of entrepreneurial training participants because cross-sector training was a new concept for the participants rather than a continuation of previous entrepreneurship training.

The severe barrier to the empowerment program’s success is the difference between the government’s perception and KKBM. Differences in perception also occur between the central government and technical implementers related to the concept of sustainability. The central government emphasizes the concept of entrepreneurship in groups so that it can be easily controlled, and people’s business credit can be easily obtained. Technical implementers, on the other hand, are more concerned with how they are running the business first. As one of the implementers noted, “if they want to run independently without pursuing the program goal, they are welcome because the essential one is that they can make money by doing business. Whatever it is, they should not go back abroad because of financial reasons” (BT, Personal interview, April 20, 2019). The government aims to empower through entrepreneurship training to develop women ex-migrant workers to become independent through some entrepreneurial activities. In fact, KKBM, as a program implementer, realizes that not all of the participants in the program are interested in those activities. Instead, those who are at a productive age often prefer to return to working abroad. Changing these habits cannot be done in the short term. Instead, it requires serious and gradual efforts (Blanchard, 2001). Furthermore, the government should not blame the participants because it is complicated to empower them to conduct an entrepreneurial activity.

This disruption in empowerment communication activities undoubtedly undermines the communication process’s effectiveness in ensuring the long-term viability of the women's ex-migrant worker empowerment program. Each empowerment actor has a different perspective, which is due to a lack of communication among them. The Cirebon KKBM COs believe that the government will continue to support empowerment activities, including providing funding and facilities, for as long as the KKBM exists. Yet the central government has only promised assistance for the first two years, with the intent that KKBM will become an independent community for
empowering female ex-migrant workers. Furthermore, I argue that this group should be autonomous because of the government’s limited knowledge of the situation of women ex-migrant workers and little knowledge of the potential of their region.

Conclusion

The empowerment program put forth by the government through the community (KKBM) to transform the Indonesian women ex-migrant workers’ empowerment through entrepreneurship activities has not been successful. In other words, women ex-migrant workers favored going back to work abroad or taking on other positions that offered a higher level of financial security. This is due to the government’s ineffective approach to learning about and developing a strategic plan for carrying out the empowerment program. They did not gain a full understanding of the motivations, mentality, and potential of the Pegagan Kidul village. The focus group conversation should be conducted dialogically, concentrating on the choice of the format for the participants’ training in the empowerment program. Due to the participants’ submissive behaviors, it may not be easy to encourage their involvement. Still, the government can aid in the effort by observing and mapping the area to identify potential resources. As a result, they can deliver more efficient program training. In addition, communication disruptions occur due to differences in perceptions among empowering actors regarding program concepts and techniques. Although the KKBM COs were considered to have positive motivation and enthusiasm for empowerment, they lacked management experience because they lacked education. Other training activities are needed to effectively empower women ex-migrant workers to benefit from entrepreneurship activities.

References


