

ELDERLY EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN INDEPENDENT FOOD BARN

Sri Wiryanti Boedi Oetami ¹, Bea Anggraini ², Dwi Handayani ³

Universitas Airlangga

¹ sri-w-b-0@fib.unair.ac.id, ² bea.anggraini@gmail.com, ³ dwi-h@fib.unair.ac.id

Abstract

This community service is focused on empowering the elderly. Elderly empowerment is an effort to make the elderly active and responsive. Activities in self-sufficient food storage with a priority on vegetable farming are suitable for empowering the elderly. Planting activities while enjoying a fresh and green environment are light ways that can help relax and are safe for the elderly. This community service is carried out by socializing pot farming techniques, hydroponics, aquaponics, and vertical gardens. The method used is participatory education and socialization with material related to the provision of planting media, nurseries, planting, and management of vegetable products. Participants in this activity are elderly who are members of farmer groups. The result of the dedication is the realization of a vegetable garden, and the product can be sold to the elderly group in the Rungkut Barata residential area, Rungkut Menanggal Village, Gunung Anyar District, Surabaya. A vegetable garden in this environmental facility illustrates an urban agricultural 'oasis', which is expected to be a reference for optimal utilization of public facilities. In addition, activities can be a reference in empowering the elderly as active and responsive people towards their environment.

Keywords: Active Participation, Empowerment, Elderly, Independent Food Storage.

INTRODUCTION

The term empowerment, which is commonly associated with community empowerment, is probably already familiar. One of the government programs is closely related to community empowerment programs. As is well known, the community empowerment program launched by the government as well as by social/community organizations and professional organizations is an effort to deal with the vulnerabilities or deficiencies that many people still experience. One of the government empowerment programs is the empowerment of the elderly.

Elderly empowerment is one of the government's programs, considering that the number of elderly people in Indonesia has reached 20.24 million people, equivalent to 8.03 percent of the entire Indonesian population in 2014 (BPS, 2019). Elderly problems are of concern to all parties, including the government, community organizations, and the community itself. Seniors need to be empowered. Law No. 13 of 1998 explains that empowering the elderly is "an effort to increase the

physical, mental, spiritual, social, knowledge, and skills of the elderly ready to be utilized according to their respective abilities" (Anonymous, 1998).

Referring to the meaning of empowerment comes from the basic word 'daya' which means "strength" or in English "empowerment", the meaning of giving power or strength. Community empowerment aims to give weak or vulnerable groups the power to be independent. Related to the word "vulnerable life" which means lacking/not having the power/strength to live independently, especially in meeting the basic needs/basic needs of daily life such as food, clothing/clothing, housing/boards, education, health, empowerment aims giving strength to be independent in meeting the basic needs of life. Providing strength or power to people who are vulnerable to being independent or powerless is one of the responsibilities of the government, although they must also receive full support from various parties, especially their environment to participate in the implementation of each empowerment program/activity. Empowering the elderly as a community empowerment program in planning and collective action, to solve social problems or meet social needs according to their abilities and resources (Hamid, 2018).

Elderly empowerment is an effort to protect the elderly from vulnerability to their physical and psychological health. Being healthy physically and mentally is a form of health that is needed by the elderly to become resilient elderly. According to. Dr. Jusnichsan Solichin in the scientific platform of the Jakarta Islamic University in Argyo Dermatoto (2006: 12) "Old people can achieve happiness if they feel needed and loved and they can still participate in their lives" (Demartoto, 2006). Gerontologists and the World Health Organization (WHO) introduce and encourage countries to use an active aging approach to the elderly. Active aging is a concept that focuses on the functioning of the elderly toward their environment. WHO defines active aging as active aging, namely health, participation, and safety processes to improve the quality of life of parents as they age. The three main pillars of active aging are health, safety, and participation in society.

Pada masa tua, lansia tidak harus diam berpangku tangan, karena justru dengan kepasifan itu, lansia semakin rentan terhadap kesehatan fisik dan psikisnya yang tentu berpengaruh besar terhadap kerentanan hidup dalam menjalani masa tuanya. Pemberdayaan lansia tidak berarti mempekerjakan lansia seperti dikala usia muda, Pemberdayaan lansia memiliki tujuan agar lansia tetap aktif dan responsive tanpa mempekerjakan fisik diluar batas kemampuannya. Dalam hal ini, lansia tetap terjaga dan bahagia bersama keluarga dengan tetap mendapatkan apa yang dibutuhkan. Oleh karena itu, pemberdayaan lansia harus menjadi salah satu program kebijakan dalam menangani.

To protect the elderly, the elderly empowerment program must be carried out seriously. Elderly empowerment is carried out to reduce the number of elderly victims in terms of health, economy, and security. Empowering the elderly towards a prosperous, happy, and healthy life both physically and mentally is understood as an effort to prepare for a quality and healthy life for the elderly.

Quality healthy elderly are people who are classified as old but still active and responsive. Active and responsive is a concept that focuses on the functioning of the elderly toward their environment. Active and responsive elderly is a necessity if the aging process of the elderly is

carried out with behavior that continues to optimize movement and participation by their physique and age context.

The self-sustaining food storage activity is a relaxed activity of planting useful productive vegetables while enjoying a fresh and green environment. These are light ways that can help relax. In addition, planting as an activity is an activity that can be done in the yard or public facilities around them. The priority of farming activities as an activity to fill leisure time is a relaxed and safe activity for the elderly.

Therefore, the elderly in their activities in self-sufficient food storage is very useful to keep the elderly from boredom and mental stress. Even during a pandemic, independent food storage activities can help the elderly stay in touch with family and friends, and have fun and healthy activities. An activity that supports the elderly to become resilient in their old age.

Self-sustaining food storage activities in the neighborhood can be beneficial activities for the elderly to live a healthy, active, independent, and productive age. In addition, this activity strengthens the values of social harmony, solidarity, cooperation, and collaboration between citizens. Vegetable planting as an independent food storage activity is an activity suitable for the elderly. This is because the elderly remain active and can breathe fresh air while sunbathing which can increase their immunity. Independent food storage activities with gardening are activities that maintain activity, flexibility, fun, and health.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This activity was carried out both in the yard and in the field as a public facility located in the Rungkut Barata residential area, Rungkut Menanggal Village, Gunung Anyar District, Surabaya City. The activity is also an effort to realize urban agriculture which becomes an 'oasis' of urban community life. The method used in implementing the program includes the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. At the planning stage, a communicative and coordinating approach was taken for the elderly who are members of farmer groups implemented using participatory education and socialization methods related to understanding the use of public facilities in residential areas for productive gardens from vegetable crops. The material provided is related to the provision of planting media, nurseries, planting, and management of vegetable products. The implementation phase includes making planting media, making organic fertilizers and compost, nurseries, treating plants related to pest or weed attacks, and harvest picking techniques. At the evaluation stage, it was carried out to find out the planting media used for planting, nursery skills and the process of planting on the right land/media, plant care skills with fertilization and control of pests and weeds, as well as an evaluation of crop yield management. The successes and obstacles in the self-sustaining food storage activities are used as evaluation material for further planting activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With this activity, the elderly and the community, especially farmer groups, understand better how to optimize their yards with economic value so that they can become pioneers for independent food storage areas. The results of the activity found that the elderly have passion and are active in planting vegetables, ginger, and turmeric in fasum. They actively develop various types of plants by cultivating both in pots, hydroponically, aquaponically, and in a vertical garden.



Figure 1: Elderly Activities in Vegetable Cultivation



Figure 2: Elderly Activities in Hydroponic Planting

In this activity, the elderly seemed to enjoy, be happy, and cheerful, because, in addition to being able to communicate with each other, they felt they had the opportunity to play a role in society and had experience in planting with various media. This is reflected in the smile on his face, his laughter, and his healthy physical condition. This situation is described in activity theory which shows that the more active and involved older adults are, the less likely they are to grow old and the more likely they are to feel satisfied with their lives (Rozali, 2010). High life satisfaction can be achieved if individuals continue to carry out activities that they consider meaningful and can contribute to society

Empowering the elderly directly or indirectly will increase their physical endurance and physical and mental health. In addition, the elderly can direct, control, shape, and manage their lives. The elderly still have independence and the ability to improve self-existence in the environment and society. Empowering the elderly by giving them an active role also gives them a sense of self-confidence and enthusiasm for a productive life.

The results of training and assistance in the field of planting media and making organic fertilizers are sufficient to provide knowledge to the elderly in processing fertilizer from kitchen waste. The elderly find this knowledge useful, because besides being able to participate in reducing waste that is thrown away for nothing. The results of organic fertilizers can be used as a medium for soil loosening and for plant growth to be healthy and fertile.

In nursery activities, until the planting process, there are difficulties experienced by the elderly. These difficulties include the process of land transfer. This is understandable because they are not used to seeding plants and moving plants. As is known, the elderly usually plant from plants that have roots. However, after receiving training and assistance, the elderly have begun to understand the characteristics of plants that can be transferred. In plant maintenance activities with the results of making organic compost, the elderly, who so far have only provided fertilizer and vitamins by buying it, once there is assistance about making compost, the elderly are very interested, and want to try it immediately. According to the elderly and farmer groups at this activity, making compost by storing it in used barrels has many advantages, including: saving costs, while vitamins and packaged fertilizer products are expensive, and if used incorrectly, the plants will not grow well. In addition, the materials needed in the manufacture of organic fertilizers are always ready in the organic waste from the kitchen. This also equips the elderly to participate in participating in government programs related to waste segregation. Organic waste can be directly made into organic fertilizer and non-organic waste can be recycled through the waste bank program.

Plant care training. In this activity, all the elderly and farmer groups were involved. From the results of the plant maintenance training, they can understand the proper care of vegetable plants and types of ginger and turmeric. This activity is very useful for the elderly. By watering in the morning or at night, in addition to caring for the plants so that they are fertile and grow optimally, the elderly can do activities and sunbathe which is very beneficial for their physical health. Regarding plant diseases, the elderly and farmer groups were given the understanding to use the medicines that are needed, not necessarily every time, but more according to the conditions of the plants.

Harvest training and assistance. Before there was training and mentoring, crop yields of vegetable products such as mustard greens, spinach, and kale were directly harvested by uprooting the roots or cutting the lower part of the plant without residue. With assistance, they understand that this method is not appropriate, because, in addition to killing the plants and having to repeat nurseries, this requires a long and inefficient process. During harvest assistance, they understand the technique of cutting from the edge that is ready for harvest, because there are few kitchen needs, so that the mustard, spinach, and kale plants can still grow again without having to re-seeding.

Vertical planting cultivation activities are filled with activities to design planting media with a vertical garden arrangement that has been installed beside the entrance to the housing. The arrangement of vertical garden is filled with various ornamental plants using hanging pots. Cultivating this vertical garden, in addition to giving experience to the elderly and farmer groups in utilizing narrow land, also gives an experience that the arrangement of a vertical garden with hanging pots gives beauty with colorful plants without using a large area.

Evaluation Activities. Community service activities certainly require an evaluation stage to find out whether the activity is sustainable and beneficial for the partners participating in the service. In the evaluation activity, the service team visited the location of the public facilities where

gardening activities were carried out. The purpose of this visit is to see directly how far the growth process of the plants that have been planted has progressed, whether the planting process has been successful, or whether there have been any obstacles. Although not all plants can grow well, overall the garden produces products that can be used for sale among the elderly in the housing where the activity takes place. For the elderly, this result is quite happy and proud.



Figure 3: Elderly Showing Their Harvest in Fasum Field

Empowering the elderly as members of society in principle places the elderly as the main actors and the government as a facilitator and motivator in development (empowerment). In its implementation, assistance is needed for the elderly who are considered a vulnerable group with activities that need to be carried out. Independent food storage is the right media to facilitate, mediate and advocate for the elderly. Along with elements of the local community and their institutions, independent food storage activities can be realized in the management of resources with various existing public facilities. The results of gardening are a joy in itself, apart from being productive it also contributes to the environment by creating a green, clean, and healthy environment. Happiness is an element of mental health that does not exist by itself but is an integral and essential part of overall health, which enables the full performance of all its functions or as a state of balance within oneself and between oneself and one's physical and social environment (Sartorius, 2002). Active and responsive elderly indicate that they have good mental health, can cope with pressures in life, can work productively, and contribute to society.

Independent food storage activities are sufficient to provide an opportunity for the elderly to remain active in farming both as a hobby channel and for their participation in productive activities. The involvement of the elderly in independent food storage can increase the elderly's confidence as a person who is still actively responsive physically and makes them happy. In independent food storage activities, the physical activity of planting plants, taking care of them,

and caring for them keeps the elderly busy eliminating the feeling of boredom in living their old age. Taking care of plants and caring for plants still activates the thinking power of the elderly. The elderly can be creative so that the plants are lush, green, and beautiful to look at. Fertilizing, pulling out weeds, picking dry leaves, and tidying up plants still create creative hands and physical activity that prevent cognitive decline in the elderly.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion obtained from the results of this community service activity is that the elderly and farmer groups in Rungkut Barata Housing, Rungkut Menanggal Village, Gunung Anyar-Surabaya District, are very interested and motivated to develop cultivation both in pots, hydroponics, aquaponics, vertical garden patterns. Training and assistance from making planting media to harvesting. The activities and active role of the elderly can form self-confidence and independence that they can still participate in independent food storage activities as one of the government's programs. Related to this activity, the elderly also participate in utilizing organic waste, which indirectly supports government programs in waste sorting activities.

It is recommended that this activity be sustainable, namely to develop independent food storage activities in the Rungkut Menggal Village, Gunung Anyar District, Surabaya. Subsequent services should be directed at more systematic product marketing techniques. A big thank you to LP2M Airlangga University for helping and supporting the implementation of this community service program in the form of activity funding, so that it is useful for achieving the service goals.

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