

The Role of Government in Handling the Street Children Problem *A Study Case in Surabaya City, Indonesia*

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Abstract: The phenomenon of street children is a problem that we still often encounter. This needs special attention considering children are the next generation and also the assets of the nation. The advancement of a country will depend heavily on its present and future generations. Therefore, the welfare of children is an important part of the effort to create quality human resources. The government has one role to build the society for the development of a country. This research aimed to see how the role of government especially The Government of Surabaya City in handling street children problem. This research used descriptive qualitative method with data obtained from interviews and previous studies. The result explained that besides making local regulation on child protection and welfare, The Government of Surabaya City also cooperate with several parties to handle street children problem such as Social Service, Civil Service Police, National Unity and Community Protection Agency, City Police Area, Health Department, Education Department and other parties. In addition, for the empowerment of street children, The Government of Surabaya City also formed Technical Implementation Unit of The Service “Kampung Anak Negeri” which aims to restore the children rights and manifest normative and independent child behavior so they can carry out their social function adequately in public life.

1 INTRODUCTION

Over the past five decades, the phenomenon of street children has become prominent globally in major cities of the world. The United Nations estimates the worldwide population of street children at 150 million. This phenomenon is incessantly transcending to the level where it is viewed as a worrisome global existing problem. There is no country, no city and anywhere in this world today without the presence of street children (Rwamuhuru, 2011). According to Agiati (2014), street children are children who spend most of their daily life on the streets, whether looking for income or just wandering the streets or public places. This phenomenon is a social welfare issue that needs special attention because a child should be in a family that protects them and be able to meet their needs.

The conditions have become more severe since the economic crisis in 1997. Although it is not the only factor that led to street children, the impact is significant. This is due to the poverty that is getting worse because of the economic crisis. The

increasingly difficult situation indirectly led to the increasing number of children seeking activities in order to earn money to help their parents' economies by taking them to the streets and many of them were forced to leave school to earn a living on the street (Aribowo, 2009). Based on data from the National Welfare Agency (BKSN), the increase of street children before the crisis was 15% and then increased up to 100% during the crisis.

Factors that caused the children to go down to the street are not only because of economic factors, but also caused by other factors such as divorce or violence. In the opinion of Kopoka (2010); Omiyinka and Festus (2010); Lugalla & Mbwambo (1999); and Rwamuhuru (2011), the phenomenon of street children is partly a reflection of many problems such as extreme poverty, hunger, insecurity, lack of social services, child abuse, domestic violence, displacement caused by communal clashes, inadequate care, death of a parent (or both parents), need for income in the family, inability to continue in school, wilful deviance in a few children, unemployment of one or both parents, illiteracy, housing challenges, drug use

by children, and peer influence. These children find themselves with no choice but to make a living in the street for their own survival and often that of their families. Street life has become the best alternative for them in search for their livelihoods after family settings and other community support system failed.

Children are the future generation and also the assets of the nation. The advancement of a country will depend heavily on the present and future generations. Therefore, the welfare of children is important to create quality human resources. This will only happen if all parties can respect and treat children according to their rights. If children do not get their rights and also social protection then they will tend to experience problems or even become the problem itself, one of them is street children. Aep in Putra *et al* (2010) explained that the problem of street children is seen as a problem that gives a negative view of development. Their existence is not often used as poverty indicator or crisis of social values. In addition, Aribowo (2009) also mentioned that the problem of street children is a problem that has no end and will never end (Aribowo, 2009). Therefore, research on the problem of street children is necessary to be conducted.

The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (1989) as explained in Brick (2002), which came into force in September 1990, has had a huge impact in defining conceptual frameworks and humanitarian concern regarding children in adversity. The Convention asserted a number of rights for children worldwide, formulated basic principles to be applied, and created a legal obligation to put these rights and principles into practices. Concern for children in difficult circumstances was no longer a matter of humanitarian and charitable concern, but now is a legal responsibility falling on a state as party to the convention. The Convention listed the areas where the rights and interests of children must be taken into account. For example, separation from parents, freedom of expression, health, education and employment and enunciated that in all actions concerning children, the best interest of the child shall be a prime consideration.

The government and local autonomous bodies have played very important roles for the effective implementation of community development programs. Community development fundamentally involves a series of actions and decisions that improves the situation of a community, not just economically, but as a strong functioning community. In addition, Mustafa K Hussein (2003)

in Tuke *et al* (2011) described that the goals of government in the community development areas are to: ensure that local government has input into the formulation of policies and strategies aimed at enhancing the level and scope of community, social and economic development and service; and maximize local government's access to funding and resources to provide appropriate community services and facilities.

In Indonesia, Article 34 of the 1945 Constitution becomes the evidence for the importance of the government role to participate in addressing the problems of street children in Indonesia. This article mentions that the poor and neglected children are kept by the state. In addition, the government has issued Law No. 4 Year 1979 about child welfare and Law No. 23 Year 2002 about child protection. By looking at this law, it can be explained that the handling of street children is very important considering the negative impact that will arise if this problem continues. Inhibition of the fulfillment of the rights of children, especially street children, will affect the survival of the child itself, nation and country. Lema (2014) explained that from all the agents who are capable of doing something about the street children problem, the government may be the best to deal with this problem.

As one of the largest cities in Indonesia, the government of Surabaya City has also not escaped its role in dealing with street children problems. Tuke *et al* (2017) explained that local government is the closest government to the people and thus, a channel through which the community feels the pulse of other higher level of government. Local government is the hub for social, economic, technology, cultural, health and environment development for effective participation in the community development as said on the previous part.

Table 1: The number of streen children in Surabaya city.

Year	Total
2012	114
2013	94
2014	76
2015	85
2017	50

Source: Central Bureau of Statistic

The Surabaya City is one of the largest cities in Indonesia that is unavoidable from this street children problem. Until 2017, the number of street

children in Surabaya has reached 50 children, but this figure is relatively decreasing compared to previous years (Table 1). Seeing this phenomenon, the author intends to see how The Role of Surabaya City Government in Handling the Problems of Street Children.

2 LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 Definition of Street Children

The street children is defined as children who may have parents or guardians in a locality living and working in the street. Street children engage in work or employment on a regular basis with the aim of earning a livelihood for themselves or for their families. Such activities are often carried out at the expense of schooling (UNICEF and FME in Lema, 2014).

Street children are, perhaps, the most vulnerable section of the society who suffers from human deprivations of all forms. They are forced to live on the street adding to their vulnerable and distressed situations which leave them with serious implications for their growth and development. For some people, either politicians, decisions makers or general public, these children are repulsive and an anarchy of the towns and cities. However, irrespective of those concepts and perceptions, the street children have the rights as human being. (Rwamuhuru, 2011).

Lusk (1992) in Aptekar (1994) developed four categories of street children. Each group has its own psychological characteristics. First, there are poor working children returning to their families at night. They are likely to attend school and not delinquent. Second, there are independent street workers. Their family ties are beginning to break down, their school attendance is decreasing, and their delinquency is increasing. Third, there are children of street families who live and work with their families in the street. Their conditions are related to poverty. Finally, the last are the children who have family estrangement. They are residing in the streets full time and are the "real" street children.

2.1 Definition of Governance

1. Country Governance Assessment (Asian Development Bank, 2005) "Governance is the sound exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority to manage a country's resources for development. It involves the

institutionalization of a system through which citizens, institutions, organizations, and groups in a society articulate their interests, exercise their rights, and mediate their differences in pursuit of the collective good"

2. UNDP (1997) "Governance refers to how organization, including a nation, is run. It includes all the processes, systems, and controls that are used to safeguard and grow assets"

3 METHOD

This research used qualitative descriptive method to describe the role of Surabaya City Government in handling the street children problem. Data were obtained from interviews as well as literature studies from previous studies. The interview was conducted at Social Service of Surabaya City and Technical Implementation Unit of The Service "Kampung Anak Negeri" Surabaya.

4 FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In handling street children, the government of Indonesia has various basic regulations, including Article 34 of the 1945 Constitution, 10th part of Law No. 39/1999, Presidential Decree no. 36/1990, Law Number 23/2002, Child Welfare Law No. 23/2002, No. 4/1979, and Government Regulation No. 2/1988. Meanwhile, the Surabaya City Government also has several regulations in handling this street children problem. Some of these regulations are Local Regulation No. 6/2011 about The Implementation of Child Protection and No. 2/2012 about The Implementation of Social Welfare. As a manifestation of the implementation of these regulations, the Surabaya City Government held cooperation in handling people with social welfare problems by prioritizing the five categories including street children (Rahmaveda, 2017).

Amorowati (2008) described the efforts made by Surabaya City Government in handling the street children problem. These efforts consist of preventive, repressive, and empowering actions. Several institutions are also involved in these efforts, namely Social Service, Civil Service Police, National Unity and Community Protection Agency, City Police Area, Health Department, Education Department and other parties. In its implementation, not infrequently these institutions involve other stakeholders, such as NGOs including shelter houses

or educational institutions such as Institute for Research and Community Service University in Surabaya.

Preventive action is carried out in the form of socialization and appeals to the community which is done in cooperation with related institutions such as Civil Service Police and NGOs. Repressive action is carried out through the sympathetic operation of street children as well as the maintenance/disregard of related location. This activity is carried out by conducting raids on street children, which are conducted simultaneously with operations against homeless and beggars. In order to carry out this activity, The Social Service collaborates with National Unity and Community Protection Agency and also City Police Area. Street children who are rescued through sympathetic operation will undergo a pre-rehabilitation process which is identified and selected to get training. Empowerment action is done through the program of shelter house. The shelter program is an effort to provide homes for street children who are expected to be an intermediary vehicle between street children and those who help them to provide the right intervention. Ideally, the shelter house is expected to be an informal training process that provides a resocialization atmosphere for street children to the prevailing value system and norms in family and society (Amorowati, 2008)

In empowering street children in Surabaya, Social Service established a special place to accommodate children with social problems called Technical Implementation Unit of The Service "Kampung Anak Negeri" with the capacity of 35 people. This unit was formed by the Social Service on January 4, 2009 based on the Decision of the Head of Service Number: 467//436.6.15/2009 followed by Regulation of Mayor No. 61/2012 about the Technical Implementation Unit of The Service "Kampung Anak Negeri" of Social Service Surabaya City. In Kampung Anak Negeri, an empowerment program is aimed at children with social problems, including street children by giving power to street children so they can improve their independence and will not go to the street again.

Technical Implementation Unit of the Service "Kampung Anak Negeri" has a vision to make children with social problems behave normatively and independently so that they can perform their social functions adequately in social life. Its mission is to organize social services for children with social problems, to raise awareness to develop the potential of children with social problems and facilitate the growth of motivation and community effort in

handling children with social problems. The children with social problem mentioned above include street children, neglected children and naughty children.

The results of the interviews with Technical Implementation Unit of The Service "Kampung Anak Negeri" explained that street children who were trained there participated in various activities to change their behavior which includes mentoring, spiritual, physical, social and talent. Mental spiritual guidance is greatly emphasized through worship activities *i.e.* praying and Quran reciting. Physical guidance is done by conducting a physical fitness exercise and community service of "Kampung Anak Negeri" environment. Social guidance aims to build communication with others through the socialization of the surrounding environment, and guidance of interest by facilitating activities in accordance with their interests and talents such as entrepreneurship, sports, arts, bike racing, handicraft, self-defenced art and others.

Implementation of street children empowerment in Surabaya through are done through two processes, namely recruitment process and service process (Sari, 2015). Based on the results of interviews with the Social Service Surabaya, this recruitment process starts from the raid stage which is an activity that aims to pick up or take by force according to the provisions of the law against children with social problems from the streets. Street children are rescued from raids are then taken to Environmental Social Cottage in Keputih. In there, they follow the initial training and medical examination for 7 days. For those who have a family, the family is offered to follow a special coaching/empowering in Technical Implementation Unit of The Service "Kampung Anak Negeri". At this stage, street children's families are given explanations about the purpose and benefits of coaching/empowering, the form of activities and facilities of "Kampung Anak Negeri". If they are not willing, street children will be returned to the family. For those who do not have a family, they will be sent to Kampung Anak Negeri. This information is justified by "Kampung Anak Negeri" who said that if no family visiting/picking up and deemed to be fostered or meet the requirements to be built in "Kampung Anak Negeri", they will be registered to "Kampung Anak Negeri".

Identification and selection activities involve doctors, psychologists, administrators, and street children companion. The identification process includes a thorough physical health examination, psychic examination, resume completion, and administrative completeness checks. In this process,

street children who are considered qualified as clients with criteria such as aged between 10-18 years old, Surabaya residents, from poor families, no physical and spiritual disabilities, and school dropouts (Sari, 2015)

After going through the recruitment process it will be continued with service process. Sari (2015) explained that during the empowerment in “Kampung Anak Negeri”, each child is given physiological needs such as food service, board, and clothing. At this stage, the child must follow some service procedures at “Kampung Anak Negeri” consisting of:

1. Assessment

Assessment is a review and disclosure activity to find out all client issues, establish plan and implementation of intervention. These activities include (a) Social Assessment: the process of disclosing the problem and the ability of the client through interview and observation. (b) Psychological Assessment: the process of expressing interest, potential ability and intelligence. (c) Health assessment: examination process of physical condition and health.

2. Orientation Activities

Orientation is done in the form of introduction of programs and environment of the shelter through group dynamics and outbound activities. The goal is that children can have confidence and grow social solidarity.

3. Intervention

The purpose of intervention is to create and change the child's mental and behavior to be adaptive and normative. Interventions consist of mental guidance, physical guidance, social counseling, interest guidance, and cognitive guidance.

4. Termination

Termination of the training program is for the children who have followed the activities for 6 months. This process can be remedied because if it is considered that 6 months has not been enough to change the mental and behavior of children.

5. Evaluation

Evaluation is the process of evaluating the whole performance of the program. The purpose of the evaluation itself is to know the success/failure of the programs and activities to children so it can be improved in the future.

5 CONCLUSION

Children are the future generation and also the assets of the nation. The advancement of a country will depend heavily on the present and future generations. Therefore, protection of the children rights is something that must be done. The phenomenon of street children certainly explains the life of a child who is far from what they should be. The government, especially local government, have played very important roles for the effective implementation of community development programs including children development. Local government is the closest government to the people and thus, a channel through which the community feels the pulse of other higher level of government. Local government is the hub for social, economic, technology, cultural, health and environment development for effective participation in the community development as said on the previous part (Tuke *et al*, 2017).

Surabaya already has regulations and several programs in dealing with street children problems. As explained by UNDP (1997) that governance refers to how organization, including a nation, is run. It includes all the processes, systems, and controls that are used to safeguard and grow assets. In addition, Lema (2014) also explained that of from all the agents who are able to do something about the problem of street children, the government is probably the best to deal with this. In detail, the result explained that besides making local regulation on child protection and welfare, The Government of Surabaya City also collaborates with several parties to handle street children problem such as Social Service, Civil Service Police, National Unity and Community Protection Agency, City Police Area, Health Department, Education Department and other parties. In addition, for the empowerment of street children, The Government of Surabaya City also formed Technical Implementation Unit of The Service “Kampung Anak Negeri” which aims to restore the children rights and manifest normative and independent child behavior so they can carry out their social function adequately in public life.

The Surabaya City Government has carried out its role in handling the problem of street children in Surabaya city both in terms of regulation and practice. However, this has not been able to handle the problems of street children in Surabaya optimally. Although the number of street children tends to decrease, there are still around 50 children who are recorded as street children. These children should get all their rights as a child as stated in the

Child Protection Regulations. The empowerment program carried out by the Surabaya city government through the “Kampung Anak Negeri”, which aims to restore children's rights, is only able to accommodate about 35 street children. In addition, there are still a number of street children who have not completed their empowerment programs at the “Kampung Anak Negeri”. Of course, these obstacles must be addressed immediately so the problem of street children in Surabaya can be resolved.

The challenge for all societies is to create a system of governance that promotes, supports and sustains human development – especially for the poorest and most marginal. Therefore, Surabaya City Government should continue to develop in handling the problems of street children so that the implementation of the program handling and empowering street children can be more effective and efficient.

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