

Encouraging Creativity, Realizing Dreams with the Community

The Regional Community Development Program, Palu City

Presenter

H. Rusdy Mastura, *The Mayor of Palu*

Dharma Gunawan, *Head of Palu BAPPEDA*

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“I want to make the people want to dream, that is what I want,” said the Mayor of Palu, H. Rusdy Mastura, with fervor when he was asked why the Regional Community Development Program (PDPM) was important for the people of Palu.

This spirit is infectious and has an energy that cannot be stemmed. The Head of BAPPEDA, Ir Dharma Gunawan, sees this program as proof that the Palu Municipal Government encourages creativity in its citizens and makes it possible for real sustainable development to occur. “We want to change the image of BAPPEDA which has been seen as an eraser of ideas from the community,” he said, while explaining that PDPM frees the community to suggest any sort of development activity and discuss it among themselves before proposing the idea to PDPM for funding.

Zulfinachri Achmad, the Head of the Infrastructure Sub-Directorate, BAPPEDA Palu, which was directly involved from the time PDPM was launched and first implemented, explained it most clearly in the CD Newsletter: Media Komunikasi & Informasi Lintas PIC Sulawesi Second Edition, January 2009:

Sovereignty is in the hands of the people. These words are a harsh statement aimed at government in terms of carrying out a mandate that has been assigned to them. The people’s sovereignty needs greater attention from the government in many aspects, including their existence in implementation of governance and regional development.

Ongoing community empowerment will hopefully increase empowerment values in the community through economic empowerment, and social and environmental empowerment with the aim of eradicating the feeling of being disempowered in the poor community. Concrete steps include increasing critical awareness of the position within the social political structure of the poor community.

To undertake this task, the Mayor of Palu, on behalf of the Government of Palu, on August

8, 2007, began implementation of the Regional Community Empowerment Program (PDPM) Palu City which began with the dispatch of Community Facilitators. PDPM Palu is a regional program which aims to increase work opportunities and community prosperity in Palu based on local knowledge and potential, and is implemented based on community awareness and adheres to the principle of from, by, and for the people. Therefore, the community is the implementer and the Government is only the outer system.

The PDPM implementation is distinguished by the formation of a Regular Urban Village Development Program (PPKB) and unearthing of community needs in three community discussions. The PPKB is formulated, planned, confirmed and implemented by all the people in Palu in community meetings. With this system, different urban villages/wards are not required to have the same activities and development plans because each of the communities has very different needs.

In implementing planning with the community– participatory planning – PDPM Palu is a key program from the Regional Government of Palu City and a groundbreaking initiative from the Regional Government in strengthening community organizations through implementing and improving community empowerment. The planning process uses participatory planning and a Community-based Regional Development Planning Approach and a Collaboration Mechanism for social transformation.

At this time, this program is the only one of its kind in Indonesia as all funds come directly from the Palu Municipal budget, which in financial year 2008 allocated and disbursed Rp.5,294,000,000 for the program.

With PDPM Palu, participatory planning in Palu City can help increase critical awareness in the city of planning, implementing, and monitoring development in their region. The potential in their environments can be used and the problems and solutions can be identified together and regional government planning and implementing can be conducted based on the local knowledge in each area.

The PDPM initiative from the Regional Government of Palu City funded entirely by the municipal budget shows the seriousness of the Palu Municipal Government in implementing regional development with bottom-up planning and also shows the concern of the government for the aspirations and interests of the community it is leading.

The spirit driving the creativity and making dreams come true in PDPM is having a real impact. Agus Rahmatullah (26), the manager of a motorbike wash called Katyusha Mandiri, which receives help from PDPM, said “Before I worked as a odd-jobs person, most of my friends were unemployed. Now I’m proud, I opened a business and can help my unemployed friends and can make a living for my wife and kids.”

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