

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY GROUPS CONCERNED WITH CORRECTIONAL CARE IN EMPOWERING CORRECTIONAL CLIENTS THROUGH JOB TRAINING AT MR. KUMIS BICYCLE REPAIR SHOP



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ABSTRACT

This study highlights the importance of fostering independence and empowerment among correctional clients in Indonesia, particularly in response to high crime rates associated with low education levels and unstable employment. The empowerment process is implemented through vocational training at the Pak Kumis Bicycle Workshop under the supervision of the Purwokerto Probation Board. Using a descriptive qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving clients, correctional officers, members of the Pokmas Lipas group, and clients' families. The findings show that Pokmas Lipas plays a significant role in supporting clients by providing technical skills, psychosocial encouragement, and the development of positive work attitudes. As a result, clients demonstrate improved competence, confidence, discipline, and readiness to live independently after completing their correctional programs. The program also contributes to faster and smoother social reintegration into the community. However, several challenges remain, including inconsistent discipline among clients, limited training facilities, unclear legal status of Pokmas Lipas, and low community involvement. Overall, the study concludes that vocational training through Pokmas Lipas is highly beneficial in strengthening the independence and skills of correctional clients, although improvements in resources, institutional support, and community acceptance are still needed to optimize its impact.

Keywords: *Correctional Clients; Empowerment; Job Training; Social Reintegration*

INTRODUCTION

Crime remains a major social issue in Indonesia, particularly influenced by low levels of education and limited access to employment. Individuals with inadequate educational backgrounds often struggle to secure decent jobs, which leads to economic pressure and, in many cases, criminal activity. According to quarterly data released by the Directorate General of Corrections (Ditjenpas), out of 225,531 inmates in Indonesia, 155,957 did not graduate from senior high school and 21% were unemployed. This highlights the structural relationship between poverty, unemployment, and criminality in the country (Andressony, 2024).

The distribution of inmates based on education further confirms this issue. The table below shows that the majority of inmates in Indonesia have only completed junior or senior high school, while the number of inmates with higher education degrees is relatively small.

Table 1
Educational Background of Inmates

Education Level	Inmates
Senior High School	79,098
Junior High School	53,057
Elementary School	49,106
Did Not Finish School	21,552
University (Bachelor)	6,220
Master's & Doctorate	770

Source: Directorate General of Corrections, 2022

The data clearly shows that most criminal offenders come from groups with low educational attainment, which subsequently limits their ability to access decent employment. Education is therefore a crucial factor in crime prevention, as it not only equips individuals with knowledge but also increases opportunities for economic stability. In addition to education, economic vulnerability also plays a central role in the emergence of crime. Many offenders either did not have any job or were employed in low-paying sectors that failed to meet basic living standards. Data from Ditjenpas further shows that narcotics-related offenses are particularly high among unemployed individuals or those with unstable income. This suggests that poverty and inequality remain strong determinants of criminal behavior in Indonesia.

Recognizing these challenges, the Indonesian correctional system has developed programs to support reintegration through community-based initiatives. One such initiative is the establishment of *Kelompok Masyarakat Peduli Pemasarakatan (Pokmas Lipas)* or Community Groups Concerned with Corrections. These groups work in collaboration with the Probation Office (*Balai Pemasarakatan/Bapas*) to provide skill training, counseling, and employment opportunities for correctional clients. As argued by Wijata & Muhammad (2023), engaging community groups in reintegration not only provides practical training but also reduces the stigma that often hampers ex-offenders from reentering society. An illustrative case can be seen in *Bapas Class II Purwokerto*, which has partnered with ten *Pokmas Lipas* in various fields such as tailoring, laundry services, automotive workshops, and small-scale businesses. The following table lists some of the community partners:

Although these programs provide opportunities, participation remains relatively low. Out of 711 total clients at Bapas Purwokerto, only 27 are actively engaged in Pokmas Lipas training activities. This reflects a major challenge: while the programs are designed to improve skills and economic resilience, many clients remain passive due to lack of motivation, limited awareness, or persistent stigma in the community.

One noteworthy success story is the Pak Kumis Bike & Wash workshop, which has managed to attract and retain four active clients. This workshop trains clients in motorcycle repair and washing services, skills that are highly relevant to community needs. Importantly, some clients who graduated from this program have successfully opened their own small repair shops, demonstrating the transformative potential of skill-based empowerment. As Sugiri et al. (2022) note, such programs not only equip clients with technical abilities but also rebuild their confidence and prepare them to reenter the labor market.

Nevertheless, the overall effectiveness of Pokmas Lipas is constrained by limited participation rates. If the number of clients who join these programs remains small, the long-term goal of reducing recidivism and promoting social reintegration may not be fully achieved. Therefore, further strategies are required to strengthen participation, such as more intensive socialization, incentives, or partnerships with private sector employers. This study focuses on the role of Community Groups Concerned with Corrections in empowering correctional clients through vocational training. The case of Pak Kumis Bike & Wash is highlighted as a best practice example, where technical training has led to both economic independence and social reintegration for former inmates. This focus is significant because it not only contributes to reducing recidivism but also aligns with broader national goals of poverty reduction and community empowerment.

LITERATURE REVIEW.

Several previous studies have emphasized the importance of community involvement in supporting the correctional system, particularly in the reintegration of clients into society. Setyawan and Muhammad (2021) examined the role of Community Groups Concerned with Corrections in assisting correctional clients. Their study formulated two main issues: the functions of Pokmas Lipas in providing guidance and the challenges faced in its implementation. Using a qualitative approach, the research revealed that Pokmas Lipas collaborates with various institutions, such as Islamic boarding schools and legal aid organizations, to deliver more comprehensive assistance. These findings highlight that the existence of Pokmas Lipas not only contributes to client mentoring but also strengthens the broader goal of social reintegration.

Empowerment Theory

Empowerment is essentially a process of providing power or authority to those who are powerless while reducing the dominance of those who are overly powerful in order to achieve balance. Rappaport (1987) defines empowerment as a process that enables individuals and communities to gain control over their own lives. This involves strengthening personal capacities, expanding access to resources, and ensuring meaningful participation in social processes. In the context of correctional settings, empowerment of clients refers to efforts to help them develop practical skills, build self-confidence, and create opportunities for productive participation in society. Furthermore, empowerment is not merely about granting authority or power but also involves an

educational process aimed at improving the quality of individuals and groups. Rappaport (1987) emphasizes that empowerment enables individuals to acquire adequate skills, knowledge, and authority to influence both their own lives and the lives of others. Similarly, Ife (1995) argues that empowerment consists of providing resources, opportunities, knowledge, and skills that enhance the capacity of communities to determine their future while actively participating in social life.

According to Afriansyah (2023), empowerment can be understood through two main dimensions: enabling, which refers to providing capacity or ability, and authorizing, which refers to granting authority to act. Moreover, Afriansyah & Faried (2023) highlight that human beings are the primary subjects of empowerment, meaning that they are the main actors in achieving their own independence, freedom, and bargaining power. Thus, empowerment is not only relevant as a poverty alleviation effort but also as a broader social transformation process that encourages communities to become self-reliant, independent, and competitive in the face of modern challenges.

Role Theory

The concept of role is closely related to an individual's social status within society. According to Edy Suhardono (2016), the expected behavior of a person who holds a certain status is referred to as a role. In this sense, status and role can be seen as two sides of the same coin. In Indonesia, the term "role" originally comes from theater, describing a person through thoughts, feelings, character, conditions, physical traits, and social position. Hence, role carries a positive meaning as an influence that can affect social dynamics. Suhardono (2016) further explains that the degree or level associated with a person's position in society is called a role, which is closely tied to one's occupation or position. Each position carries both rights and obligations, making the individual who holds that position a role occupant. Rights represent the authority to act or refrain from acting, whereas obligations refer to responsibilities that must be fulfilled.

Thus, understanding social roles is essential, including in the context of Pokmas Lipas, whose role in guiding correctional clients is crucial for equipping them with skills to improve their economic conditions. In addition, Suhardono (2016) outlines several key characteristics of roles. First, roles include norms related to an individual's position in society, functioning as guidelines in social interactions. Second, roles represent what individuals are expected to do within the larger community. Third, roles can also be understood as patterns of behavior that are considered significant for the social framework of society. In correctional contexts, the role of Pokmas Lipas is not limited to providing guidance but also extends to facilitating the social reintegration of clients, thereby preparing them to contribute productively to community life.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach to explore the role of the Bengkel Sepeda Pak Kumis job training program in supporting the social reintegration of correctional clients. The qualitative method was chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and processes involved in the empowerment of clients through vocational training. By focusing on descriptive analysis, the study aimed to capture in-depth insights rather than statistical generalizations. Data were collected through multiple techniques, including in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with correctional clients participating in the training program, correctional officers, and community partners involved in supporting the program. Observations were carried out

directly during the training process to examine the dynamics of skill acquisition and client interactions. In addition, relevant documents such as program guidelines and reports were analyzed to complement primary data and strengthen the validity of findings. The collected data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive approach through several stages, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Triangulation of data sources and methods was applied to ensure the credibility and reliability of findings. This analytical process enabled the researcher to identify patterns, themes, and relationships that illustrate the effectiveness of the training program in enhancing clients' skills, confidence, and readiness for reintegration into society.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the significant role played by Pokmas Lipas in empowering correctional clients through vocational training conducted at Bengkel Sepeda Pak Kumis. The training program served as a practical platform for clients to acquire technical skills in bicycle repair and maintenance, while also fostering psychosocial development, discipline, and work ethics. Based on interviews and observations, clients reported improvements in their technical competence, increased confidence, and a stronger sense of responsibility. These findings indicate that the involvement of Pokmas Lipas provides not only skill-building opportunities but also psychosocial support that contributes to the clients' social reintegration process.

Another important result of this study relates to the effectiveness of collaboration between correctional institutions, community partners, and Pokmas Lipas. The vocational training at Bengkel Sepeda Pak Kumis represents a concrete model of community-based empowerment, where external stakeholders directly engage in the rehabilitation process. This collaboration enhanced the relevance of training activities and ensured that clients were exposed to real working environments. Informants revealed that this practical exposure was highly valuable, as it enabled clients to learn problem-solving skills, customer interaction, and financial management within a business context. However, the implementation of the training program faced several challenges. First, the level of client participation remained relatively low compared to the total number of clients under the supervision of the Purwokerto Probation Office. Out of more than 600 clients, only a small fraction actively joined the training, which demonstrates the difficulty of engaging clients consistently. Second, facilities and resources at the workshop were limited, making it difficult to expand the scope of training. Third, the legal status of *Pokmas Lipas* and its operational framework had not yet been fully optimized, which affected its recognition and sustainability. Lastly, the low level of community involvement and lingering social stigma toward ex-offenders posed barriers to reintegration, despite the positive outcomes of the program for those who participated.

The findings of this research resonate strongly with empowerment theory (Rappaport, 1987; Ife, 1995), which emphasizes the importance of enabling individuals to gain control over their lives through skill development, access to resources, and social participation. The vocational training at Bengkel Sepeda Pak Kumis provided clients with both technical competencies and life skills, thereby equipping them with tools to achieve greater independence. These outcomes confirm that empowerment is not limited to the transfer of technical knowledge but also involves strengthening confidence, motivation, and resilience, which are essential for reintegration. From the perspective of role theory (Suhardono, 2016), Pokmas Lipas assumes a crucial role as a community actor that complements the duties of probation officers and correctional institutions. By taking on this supportive role, Pokmas Lipas expands the scope of rehabilitation beyond state

facilities, thereby reducing the burden on correctional institutions and creating a more holistic system of support. The training program demonstrates how community groups can operationalize their role in mentoring clients, offering guidance, and fostering new social identities for individuals transitioning from correctional supervision to independent living.

The results also align with previous studies that highlight the importance of community-based initiatives in correctional rehabilitation. Setyawan and Muhammad (2021) found that Pokmas Lipas enhances the reintegration process by collaborating with religious institutions and legal aid organizations. Similarly, Sugiri et al. (2022) emphasized the significance of vocational training in empowering clients economically while reducing recidivism risks. The present study adds novelty by focusing on the specific context of Bengkel Sepeda Pak Kumis, illustrating how a small-scale yet practical training program can produce tangible impacts on client independence and readiness for reintegration. Despite its achievements, the challenges identified in this study reveal structural issues that need to be addressed for sustainable empowerment. The limited participation rate indicates the need for stronger motivational strategies and incentives to engage clients consistently. The shortage of facilities and training equipment suggests that further investment and partnerships with private sectors are essential to scale up the program. Moreover, the low community involvement underscores the persistence of social stigma, which Goffman (1963) describes as a significant barrier to social reintegration. Without addressing this stigma, clients may continue to face discrimination in employment and social acceptance, which could hinder their long-term rehabilitation.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study concludes that Pokmas Lipas at Bengkel Sepeda Pak Kumis plays a vital role in empowering correctional clients by combining technical training, confidence building, and social support to foster reintegration. The program not only equips clients with practical skills but also transforms their outlook on the future, as evidenced by participants who managed to start small businesses or secure employment. However, persistent challenges such as low participation, limited facilities, and strong social stigma indicate the need for more sustainable and structured interventions to optimize the impact of community-based rehabilitation.

Future efforts should focus on strengthening collaboration among probation offices, Pokmas Lipas, local communities, and government or private stakeholders. Enhancing workshop capacity, diversifying training curricula, and expanding access to resources are essential steps to increase client participation and program effectiveness. Equally important, community acceptance and stigma reduction must be prioritized, as social support is critical to ensuring successful reintegration. With comprehensive technical training, soft-skill development, and mentoring systems, empowerment initiatives like the SEPEDA Program can serve as a sustainable model for correctional client rehabilitation in Indonesia.

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