

# Strengthening Public Organization Capacity of Fisherman Empowerment Programs in South Sulawesi Province: A Smart Society as Outcome

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**Abstract.** This research aims to analyze the ability and capacity of local government organizations in implementing fisherman empowerment programs. A qualitative approach is employed in this research to explain the capacity of local government organizations according to the context and factuality. Data are collected through observation, in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions and Documentation. Interactive data analysis methods are used to analyze the data obtained. The results of the research show that professional development is not carried out continuously and there is a lack of capacity building and training programs provided to employees, particularly relating to strengthening organizational capacity in fostering fisherman groups. As for resources and supports, there are limited human resources and budget allocations dedicated for the fisherman empowerment programs. And in organizational environment, the incentives are low, coupled with relatively rigid standard operating procedures and bureaucratic structures. The results of this research reveal that the capacity of public organizations needs to be supported by quality organizational leadership, especially facilitative and collaborative leadership. This factor becomes crucial given the role of organizational leaders as policy makers who determine the direction of policy, planning and implementation. **Keywords:** Strengthening local organization, Organization Capacity, Empowerment Programs

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# 1 Backgrounds

Public sector organizations as representatives of the government play an important role in meeting public needs. Therefore, government organizations should be able to design organizational goals that are oriented to the needs of the community. The ability of public organizations to carry out their obligations depends greatly on the capacity they have. If the organizational capacity is of high quality, then the fulfillment of public needs will certainly be of high quality. However, when the organization performs poorly, it tends to fall short of meeting public needs.

Meeting public needs is related to the basic needs of society in various fields. Empowerment has emerged as a government priority for poverty alleviation, which is a fundamental challenge for Indonesia's economic advancement, particularly in South Sulawesi Province. Two regencies with the highest poverty rates in this province are Pangkep Regency and Jeneponto Regency.

In these two regencies, the condition of marginalized communities such as fishermen's households is currently under the poverty line. Nonetheless, the current poverty of fishermen reflects the condition of their household concerns, problems, limited resources and hopes, which are not yet clearly described. Although the government has implemented poverty alleviation policies, they have not fully solved the issues that keep fishermen trapped in poverty.

South Sulawesi Province has a coast length of 1,979.97 km. And if developed in an integrated manner within the Minapolitan area, 10 coastal districts have the potential to be quite large as a driving force for the regional economy. Fishermen and fish farmers account for 6,508,330 people spread across these 10 coastal districts, or 66.67% of the population of South Sulawesi Province.

The government views fisherman empowerment programs as programs capable of alleviating poverty in fishing communities. The Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries at the central government level and the Marine Affairs and Fisheries Offices at the local government level are the leading public sector organizations that play a key role in and are responsible for these empowerment programs.

In Pangkep Regency and Jeneponto Regency, due to their limited investment capacity, most of the fishermen work as fisherman workers, small-scale fish processors, small fishermen and small traders. Small fishermen can only use resources in coastal areas with catches that continue to decline because of the competition with big vessels and a decrease in coastal resource quality. Catches (fish) that are easily damaged can weaken their bargaining position in sales transactions. In addition, the nature of exploitative relationships between fishermen, laborers and capital owners, as well as seasonal and uncertain fishing businesses, makes it difficult for impoverished fishing communities in coastal areas to escape debt and poverty from ship owners. Other environmental rules and regulations, including those governing the coast, have not functioned as they should. The poverty trap that has engulfed fishermen's lives is the result of numerous factors. These factors are caused by not only access and capital, limited human resources, fluctuations in fishing seasons and fish trading networks that exploit fishermen as producers, but also the adverse effect of fisheries modernization, which promotes overexploitation of marine resources [1].

As the leading public sector organizations, the Marine Affairs and Fisheries Offices in the two regencies are frontline organizations that have a pivotal role in overcoming poverty in fishing communities through the fisherman empowerment programs. Efforts to achieve this are highly dependent on the organizational capacity of those organizations, especially their internal capacity. The facts indicate that the fisherman empowerment programs in South Sulawesi Province are not being implemented effectively. The ineffectiveness of the programs is due to the lack of the organizational capacity among the implementers, namely

the Marine Affairs and Fisheries Offices of Pangkep Regency and Jeneponto Regency, which needs to be improved. Therefore, the objective of this research is to analyze the strengthening of the capacity of public sector organizations carrying out the fisherman empowerment programs in Pangkep Regency and Jeneponto Regency, which are of the highest poverty rates in South Sulawesi Province.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Strengthening Organizational Capacity and Public Sector Organization**

Organizational capacity is one of the strategic issues that often becomes the discourse of today's organizational theories. Organizational capacity is defined as a multifaceted concept that involves knowledge, resources, capacity and workforce to attain organizational goals [2]. Capacity building activities encompass planning strategies, upgrading technology and training management. The connection between these activities and organizational effectiveness is essential. Capacity building is employed to alter aspects of the organizational environment, thereby increasing the knowledge and productivity of the organization's human resources. Furthermore, the organization must improve its ability to meet the needs of its clients as well as its overall performance [3]. The concept of organizational capacity is no longer being adopted solely by private or non-governmental organizations, but is also being implemented by government organizations.

Public organizations are expected to continuously increase their capacity so that they can achieve the expected goals, namely realizing the various interests of the community. In the public administration theory literature where organizations are considered as machines or implementers of government tasks, there are three identified orientations [4]. First, public administration is seen as part of the governance process. In this view, public organization theory is a subset of political theory. Second, public organizations are regarded the same as private organizations. According to this viewpoint, public organization theory acts as part of organizational theory in general. Third, based on various theoretical perspectives, public organization theory is considered unattainable and undesirable.

### **2.2 Evaluation of Capacity Building in Public Organizations**

Strengthening the capacity of public organizations is a growing issue nowadays because many government organizations lack the capacity to solve public problems both at the policy and public service levels. Therefore, it is better for them to evaluate their organizational capacity on a regular basis so that they can become organizations that are adaptive to change and able to achieve the expected goals.

Analyzing the capacity of public organizations can be done using various methods or approaches, one of which is by using the Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) approach. This approach is considered relevant to organizations that are considered complex, such as government organizations. This approach includes three elements, e.g., professional development, resources and supports and organizational environment [5]. Professional development is considered important and linked to how to build the knowledge, confidence and abilities of individuals or human resources so that they are able to work better. Resources and supports focus on the various resources and assets owned by organizations that are needed to carry out their activities. And organizational environment requires quality organizational leadership, appropriate incentives for employees and clear and effective policies and standard operating procedures.

### **3. Research Method**

A qualitative approach is used in this research. This approach is selected to allow for the phenomena in this research to be explained according to the context. The research strategy used is a case study with an exploratory type, where case studies are considered the right choice to use in a qualitative research approach [6]. This research is carried out in South Sulawesi Province, where the people work as fishermen because of the topography of the area, i.e., coastal area.

The data are collected by observing the activities of the leading public sector organizations that carry out the fisherman empowerment programs. The interviews are also conducted with the following key informants: a) officials and staff of the Marine Affairs and Fisheries Office; b) fisheries extension officers; c) non-government organizations; and d) fisherman groups. In addition, a search is carried out for various documents and reports related to the fisherman empowerment programs.

Primary and secondary data sources are used in this research. The interactive data analysis methods are employed to analyze the data obtained, including stages of data collection, data condensation, data presentation and conclusion drawing [7].

### **4 Result and Discussion**

#### **4.1 Strengthening Public Organization Capacity in Fisherman Empowerment Programs**

This research utilizes an organizational capacity building approach [5]. In analyzing the organizational capacity of the implementers of the fisherman empowerment programs, this approach encompasses 3 elements, namely professional development, resources and supports and organizational environment. The findings of this research are as follows.

The first element is professional development. The results of this research indicate that the Marine Affairs and Fisheries Offices have so far paid little attention to the quality of their human resources. This is marked by the lack of capacity building and training programs for employees. Consequently, they are unable to maximize the fisherman empowerment programs. Employees at the Marine Affairs and Fisheries Offices in Pangkep Regency and Jeneponto Regency can only attend a capacity building and training program once a year. Furthermore, the number of organizational human resources who can participate is also limited. According to the information obtained, the number of employees who can take part in the training program is 5-10 people in a year. Apart from that, the training program given does not pertain to technical training for the fisherman empowerment programs. This leads to the inability of human resources to assist and foster the empowerment groups.

Other findings reveal that the technical assistance provided by the Marine Affairs and Fisheries Offices is ineffective. In fact, it is the fisheries extension officers from the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries who dominate and continue to carry out technical assistance. The evaluation of the fisherman empowerment programs in the two regencies is done tentatively and inconsistently. Besides, the results of the evaluation are often not followed up so that the empowerment programs do not improve in the implementation.

The second element is resources and supports. The results of this research demonstrate that the number of human resources owned by the Marine Affairs and Fisheries Offices for

implementating the fisherman empowerment programs is limited. The comparison of the number of human resources between the two regencies can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of Marine Affairs and Fisheries Office Human Resources

<b>Marine Affairs and Fisheries Office</b>	<b>Number of human resources</b>
Pangkep Regency	39
Jeneponto Regency	45

Source: processed data, 2023

The above data indicates that the Marine Affairs and Fisheries Offices in the two regencies have a limited number of human resources. As a result, the employees have an enormous workload in implementing the fisherman empowerment programs. In addition, because Pangkep Regency is an archipelago, this condition makes it difficult for them to work on such empowerment programs, especially in mentoring and coaching fisherman groups. The same condition also occurs in Jeneponto Regency.

Another major obstacle faced by the Marine Affairs and Fisheries Offices lies in the budget allocation dedicated for the fisherman empowerment programs. The ineffectiveness of these programs is caused by a limited amount of budget. The amount of budget owned by the Marine Affairs and Fisheries Offices in both regencies is provided in Table 2.

Table. 2 Amount of Marine Affairs and Fisheries Office Budget

<b>Marine Affairs and Fisheries Office</b>	<b>Amount of Budget (IDR)</b>
Pangkep Regency	10,064,269,542 IDR
Jeneponto Regency	8,807,319,466 IDR

Source: Processed data, 2023

The data presented above pertains to the amount of budget managed within one year. The budget allocations for the two regencies are used for operating expenditures, including personnel, goods and services. In fact, these budget allocations account for less than 20 percent of the total budget managed. The Marine Affairs and Fisheries Offices' limited human resources and budgets have resulted in the ineffectiveness of the fisherman empowerment programs.

The third element is organizational environment. The findings of this research indicate that the heads of the Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Offices in the two regencies have the political will to improve organizational capacity. The commitment of these leaders has not yet resulted in an increase in organizational capacity. Moreover, the amount of incentives given to employees or human resources is limited. This further demonstrates complicated procedures in terms of the bureaucratic structure, particularly the standard operating procedures for beneficiaries of assistance in the fisherman empowerment programs.

#### **4.2 Smart Society as Outcome of Strengthening Public Organization Capacity**

The results of this research suggest that strengthening the capacity of government organizations or public organizations will encourage the creation of a smart society in fishing communities through the fisherman empowerment programs. In this research, a smart society is oriented towards coastal areas to encourage fishermen to have knowledge and economic capacities, use appropriate fisheries technology and actively participate in development programs. If Marine Affairs and Fisheries Offices as public organizations are able to carry

out internal organizational strengthening, this will encourage the implementation of quality fisherman empowerment programs which are essentially sustainable empowerment programs that fishermen can be expected to carry out independently without the continuous assistance from the local and central governments.

## 5 Conclusion

The results of this research show that the first element of professional development is not carried out continuously and there is a lack of capacity building and training programs provided to employees, particularly relating to strengthening organizational capacity in fostering fisherman groups. As for the second element of resources and supports, there are limited human resources and budget allocations dedicated for the fisherman empowerment programs. And in the third element of organizational environment, the incentives are low, coupled with relatively rigid standard operating procedures and bureaucratic structures.

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