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The Empowerment of Poor Community through Group (Case Study on Joint Group Business of the Poorest/KUBE FM in Bengkulu Province, Indonesia) Sri Putri Permata email:sriputri_jar0703@yahoo.com Lecturer at Department of Social Welfare, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Bengkulu, Indonesia

Abstract This research discussed joint group business of the poorest (KUBE FM) as an alternative to empower the poor community through a group. The research used the qualitative method. The location was in 4 villages which consist of 2 developed KUBE FM and 2 less developed KUBE FM. Informants were the head and members of KUBE FM, village and subdistrict mentors, district and provincial coaches. The finding of this research indicated that the most influential factors which interact to determine the development of KUBE FM were village mentors, the quality of interaction roles of mentors as the change agent and the commitment toward the goal. Based on findings, it could be concluded that KUBE FM could be used as a medium to empower the poor community. Keywords: Empowerment, KUBE FM, Mentor, Group Background Poverty, until now is still one of the focus of world attention. In a world conference on human rights, the United Nations affirms that extreme poverty and social exclusion is a violation of human sovereignty (in Lister, 2004). As a statement of global concern over the poverty issue, the Millennium Summit/MDGs was held in September 2000. The MDGs can only be achieved if public social services improved (Mehrotra and Delamonica, 2007). This was consistent with Smyth and Reddel's (1997) opinion by recommending the need for integration of economic and social development planning in addressing poverty issues. Related to the causes of poverty, Lister (2004) said that the main cause of chronic poverty was the inability to obtain basic social services such as education, health, sanitation and decent housing. Without the ability to achieve a decent standard of living, they will continue to be caught in poverty. According to Dowling and Fang (2009), this poverty trap was a combination of various factors, namely low income, low education and inability to reach the available social services. This is exacerbated by the occurrence of environmental damage caused by uncontrolled logging.

Meanwhile, according to Chossudovsky (2003) macroeconomic stabilization of the structural adjustment program (SAP) imposed by the IMF and World Bank on developing countries that cause poverty. According to Levitan et al (2003), programs aimed at assisting the poor can be categorized into 4 groups: cash assistance, basic subsidies such as food, housing and health services (direct provision or subsidization such as compensatory program targeted at children and youth, as well as efforts designed to expand employment opportunities (effort designed to expand opportunity for work). Meanwhile, according to the IMF and World Bank (www.imf.org), each country should formulate its own strategies for eradicating poverty in its own country (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper / PRSP). Therefore, the IMF and World Bank formulated the basic principles used as a reference in developing poverty reduction strategies. These principles involve the participation of the general public (country driven/promoting national ownership of strategies through broad-based participation of civil society), beneficial to the poor (result oriented and focused on outcomes that will benefit the poor), comprehensive recognizing the multidimensional nature of poverty), developing partnerships (partnership oriented / involving coordinated participation of development partners for example government, domestic stakeholders, external donors) and based on long-term perspective for poverty reduction. Poverty, also still a major issue in Indonesia, especially after the economic crisis of 1997-1999. One of the efforts or strategies were undertaken by the government, through the Ministry of Social Affairs, in handling the problem is implementing the poor empowerment program through group method, in this case through the joint business group of the poorest/KUBE FM (Ministry of Social RI, 2013). KUBE FM was essentially a program of empowering the poor through the provision of cash assistance as capital to manage a productive economic business to the group that has been formed. Referring to Levitan, the KUBE FM program could be categorized into efforts designed to expand employment opportunities (the effort designed to expand opportunity for work). In relation to poverty reduction. Lister (2004) said, "the answer to the powerlessness associated with poverty is commonly held to be empowerment". This was in line with Yunus's (2007) opinion by saying that what was needed to get the poor out of poverty was to create an environment that empowers them. Literature review Empowerment According to Kenny (2006) empowerment was the main concept in community development. Kenny stated that empowerment was a process to get power (power achievement). Power was intended as the capacity to place a person's will against the will or the interests of others. In the context of community development, empowerment was a collective action. Empowerment was a way in which power relationships take sides with people who are unlucky, oppressed or exploited. Empowerment raises awareness of how power is acquired and is the right of subordinates groups.

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