

# INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION IN ESTABLISHING WOMEN-FRIENDLY AND CHILD- CARING VILLAGES TO EMPOWER WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN KRICAK-YOGYAKARTA

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**Abstract.** Empowerment of women and children is crucial for sustainable social development. The Women-Friendly and Child-Caring Urban Village program aims to create an inclusive environment supporting the welfare of women and children at the local level. This study analyzes interactive communication in the formation of a Women-Friendly and Child-Caring Urban Village in Kricak, Yogyakarta, focusing on efforts to empower women and children. A descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method was used, involving in-depth interviews with the Department of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning in Yogyakarta. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data collection, presentation, reduction, and verification. The study applied McMillan's interactive communication theory, emphasizing two-way communication between government and society. Findings indicate that effective communication and collaboration between the department and the community significantly contribute to empowerment efforts, despite challenges like limited resources. This research provides insights for developing similar policies in other areas.

**Keywords:** interactive communication, women-friendly sub-districts, women's empowerment, children's empowerment, sustainable development.

## INTRODUCTION

Empowerment of women and children is one of the important pillars in social development that focuses on equality, justice, and protection (M. & Laratmase, 2023). In the Indonesian context, women's empowerment and child protection must be carried out at the village level (Sutami & Rozikin, 2024). Various government policies have been directed to realize this goal, one of which is through the Women-Friendly and Child-Caring Village program (Setyowati, et.al, 2023). Women-Friendly and Child-Caring Village is one of the village concepts developed by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia as an integration of gender perspectives and children's rights for sustainable governance in village governance (Farhani & Falasifah, 2024). There are five directives from the Indonesian president regarding this concept (Fatimah, et.al, 2023). First, empowering women in the field of gender-based entrepreneurship. Second, increasing the influence of the role of mothers in the family. Third, reducing violence against women and children. Fourth, reducing the number of child laborers and school dropouts. Fifth, preventing child marriage at an early age. Through these five directions, it is shown that the aim of the Women-Friendly and Child-Caring Village program is to reduce gender disparities in politics, economics, and other fields (Farhani & Falasifah, 2024).

Kricak Village is a village located in Tegalrejo District, Yogyakarta City, Special Region of Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia. This village faces major challenges in creating an environment that is friendly to women and cares for children. Social problems such as violence against women and children, gender inequality, and low participation of women in various aspects of life are obstacles that need to be overcome to create a just and prosperous society. As an effort to solve these problems, the Yogyakarta City government through Department of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning in Yogyakarta together with the PUSPA Forum initiated

the Women-Friendly and Child-Caring Village program in Kricak Village in 2024. Kricak Village focuses on empowering women and children with a community participation-based approach. The initiation of this program can be part of the government's concern and commitment in implementing gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment and providing the best protection for women and children in Yogyakarta City.

In achieving this empowerment goal, communication plays an important role in building community awareness and participation (Sutopo, 2016). Communication is essentially a process of social interaction between two or more parties (individuals) (Puspitaningrum, et.al). Communication can also be interpreted as the process of conveying information or ideas between fellow citizens. The form of communication activities carried out is in the form of socialization activities carried out by department to increase community understanding and participation in the program. In addition, departement held Focus Group Discussions (FGD), training, and work programs. Documentation of activities is also used as a communication medium that can influence community perceptions regarding the importance of empowering women and children.

Research on women and children empowerment has been conducted by several previous researchers. Fitriyanti, et.al, (2023) conducted a study on the Mechanism of Women's Empowerment in Entrepreneurship in Realizing Wonodoyo Village as a Women-Friendly and Child-Caring Village. This research is a field study by organizing socialization of women and children empowerment (Fitriyanti, et.al, 2023). This study has not analyzed the role of interactive communication, analysis of follow-up activities, and analysis of impact on the audience.

Research was conducted by Thalib (2015) on the Women's Empowerment Program Through Family Welfare Empowerment Organizations in Monano Village, Bone District, Bone Bolango Regency. The results of the study showed that there were weaknesses in the women's empowerment program through the organization, including: 1) it did not describe the actual reality that women's families had received programs that could improve their families' welfare, 2) there had been no good influence on increasing family income, 3) continuous evaluation had not been carried out, 4) the program implementation method was not well understood by women, 5) there had been no identification of the maximum implementation of the policy. This study has not conducted a study on women's empowerment in the field of communication.

The novelty in this study is that this study analyzes interactive communication carried out in organizing the Women-Friendly and Child-Caring Village program in Kricak Village, Yogyakarta City. This study also analyzes the challenges and impacts of implementing the program on community knowledge. This study uses interactive communication theory. The communication process is the active delivery of information from the communicator to the communicant through communication channels (Aufirandra, et al, 2017). While interactive is an interaction that occurs between two or more people. Interactive communication means communication that occurs between two people who at one time have dual roles, namely being a communicator and can also exchange roles as a communicant (Marsudi, 2018). According to McMilan and Downes (1998) interactive communication has six dimensions of interactivity, namely informing, high control, high activity, two-way, time flexibility, and high awareness of place. First, informing means that in communication, interactivity will be considered in terms of the way the communicator provides information, in other words, the communicator and the communicant must provide information to each other. Second, high control, namely in communication, interactivity will take place under the control of the communicator, but can also be applied to the communicant as a result of the communicator's control over the message he conveys. Third, high activity, namely communication that runs actively by providing feedback between the communicator and the communicant continuously. Fourth, two-way, namely communication in the form of verbal and non-verbal messages from the communicator and receiving feedback from the communicant. A communication will have greater interactivity by the way the communication must run in two directions, not just one direction. Fifth, flexibility of time means that interactive communication can take place at any time. Sixth, high awareness of place, namely about how the communicator and communicant are aware of their position to carry out interactive communication, but they can still communicate well and not offend either party (J.Downes &

McMillan, 1998). Communication can also occur in places that are not real (Tankard & Severin, 2011).

Furthermore, this study uses the concept of community empowerment which comes from the root word "power" which means the ability to do something or the ability to act. Empowerment is interpreted as a process to obtain power, strength, and ability. In essence, empowerment is a process to obtain power, strength, and ability for weak individuals and communities so that they can identify the needs and potentials as well as the problems faced and at the same time choose alternative solutions by optimizing the resources and potentials they have independently (Sulistiyan, 2004). Karl Marx explained about community empowerment, namely the process of struggle of the powerless to obtain surplus value as their normative rights (Rizal & Bahri, 2022).

Based on the background, this study has a problem formulation in the form of how interactive communication is applied in the formation of women-friendly and child-care villages in Kricak Village, Yogyakarta? What is the impact of interactive communication on the empowerment of women and children in Kricak Village? And what are the challenges faced in implementing interactive communication in women and children empowerment policies?

This study has three objectives, namely, first, to find out how interactive communication is applied in the formation of women-friendly and child-care villages in Kricak Village, Yogyakarta City. Second, to analyze the role of interactive communication in efforts to empower women and children in the village. Third, to identify the challenges faced in implementing interactive communication in women and children empowerment programs.

This research is expected to provide the following benefits: 1) providing an understanding of the application of interactive communication in the context of empowering women and children at the sub-district level, 2) providing recommendations for the development of more effective and inclusive women-friendly and child-care sub-district policies, 3) providing insight into the importance of interactive communication in creating policies that support women's empowerment and child protection.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research approach with a case study research method. Qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena in depth, not to measure or calculate numerical data. With a qualitative approach, researchers can identify the meaning contained in communication between parties involved in the process of women's empowerment and child protection in Kricak Village, Yogyakarta. The object of this study is interactive communication in the formation of a women-friendly and child-friendly village. The subjects of the study were the parties and staff of Department of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning of Yogyakarta City who were involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the women-friendly and child-friendly village program in Kricak Village, Yogyakarta. The location of the study was in Kricak Village, Tegalrejo District, Yogyakarta City.

The data used in the study are primary data and secondary data. Primary data is information data obtained first hand collected directly from the source. This primary data is the most original data in character and does not undergo any statistical treatment (Balaka, 2022). Primary data in this study were obtained through in-depth interviews with the head of the Yogyakarta City Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning Service and observation. Secondary data is data obtained indirectly from the research object (Sugiyono, 2016). Secondary data in this study were obtained through related scientific articles and documentation studies.

After the data is collected, the data will then be analyzed. Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and compiling data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation, by organizing data into categories, describing them into units, synthesizing, arranging them into patterns, choosing what is important and what will be studied, and making conclusions so that they are easily understood by oneself and others (Sugiyono, 2018). The data analysis technique in this study uses the Miles & Huberman (2018) model. Activities in qualitative data analysis are carried out interactively and continue continuously until complete, so that the data is saturated. Miles & Huberman offers a general pattern of data analysis starting with data collection, data presentation, data reduction, conclusions and verification (Miles & Huberman, 2018).

## RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

### 1.1 The Process of Establishing a Women-Friendly and Child-Caring Sub-district, Kricak Sub-district, Yogyakarta

The Women-Friendly and Child-Caring Village Program in Kricak Village, Yogyakarta was formed on April 19, 2024. The activity began with socialization in an effort to create a safe, inclusive, and caring environment for women and children. In general, socialization is defined as the process of instilling or transferring habits or values and rules from one generation to another in a group or community. (Elyas, 2020). In the socialization process, the roles that must be played by individuals are taught. In the socialization of the Women-Friendly and Child-Caring Village, the discussion is about preventing violence against women and children, as well as efforts to eliminate violations against children.



**Fig. 1 .** Socialization Activities  
Source: dp3ap2kb.jogjakota.go.id

This socialization aims to align perceptions regarding the objectives of this program, one of which is to reduce early marriage and violence against children, as well as increase women's empowerment.



After the socialization, the next activity was an FGD (Focus Group Discussion) between the Kricak Village community to explore the potential and specific problems related to women and children in the area. The FGD activity was held on May 8, 2024 at the Kricak Village office. The activity was attended by local residents and representatives from various elements of society, including activists, cadres, housewives/fathers, the Children's Forum, Family Empowerment and Welfare, women's and religious organizations, and youth forums. Various community aspirations were collected through the FGD session. Input from residents will be used to prepare future work programs.



**Fig. 2.** FGD activities  
Source: dp3ap2kb.jogjakota.go.id

After conducting the FGD, Kricak Village then formed the Women and Children's Friend Volunteers totaling 27 people . In order to support this volunteer activity, the Department of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning in Yogyakarta worked together with the PUSPA Forum to hold the Kricak Village Volunteer Training. The volunteers are tasked with providing assistance and guidance to women and children in need. These volunteers will undergo training for 3 days on June 5, 10, and 12, 2024 .



**Fig. 3 . The Volunteer Training**  
Source: dp3ap2kb.jogjakota.go.id

The volunteer are tasked with communicating policies to the community and encouraging them to actively participate in the program. The program involves not only mothers, but also various other community groups, such as teenagers, children, and community leaders. Communication between volunteers and the community is carried out interactively, using a dialogue approach that allows residents to convey the problems they face related to women and children's issues.

### **1.2 The Role of Interactive Communication in the Formation of Women-Friendly and Child-Caring Urban Villages**

Interactive communication implemented in Kricak Village plays a very important role in building public understanding and awareness of the importance of the Women-Friendly and Child-Caring Village program. This program prioritizes two-way communication between the government, community, and volunteers to ensure active community participation in every stage of policy planning and implementation. The communication model used is open dialogue, where the community is invited to discuss local issues related to women's and children's rights. This program aims to create a conducive and safe environment for women and children, by increasing public awareness to protect and monitor each other. The success of this program is highly dependent on the ability of interactive communication to create shared understanding and shared commitment from various parties.

### **1.3 Community Participation and Empowerment of Women and Children**

The Kricak Village community showed high enthusiasm for this program. This can be seen from the active participation of the community in various activities carried out, including socialization, skills training, and discussions on women's and children's rights. The community does not only consist of mothers, but also involves fathers, teenagers, and community leaders. Communication between the Department of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning in Yogyakarta, volunteers, and the community is carried out openly and inclusively, so that this program can be well received by various groups. In terms of women's empowerment, interactive

communication provides opportunities for women to access relevant information, develop skills, and gain legal knowledge that can support their rights. This program also supports child empowerment through forums that allow children to talk about the issues they face and participate in decision-making processes related to them.

Interactive communication implemented through discussion forums and trainings is in line with the concept of community empowerment that emphasizes the importance of access to information and resources. Women's empowerment programs that have been implemented through skills training and women's rights education, as well as child empowerment through children's forums, show that effective communication can improve the quality of life and welfare of women and children at the local level.

#### **1.4 Challenges in Program Implementation**

Although interactive communication and community participation went well, there were several challenges faced in implementing the Women-Friendly Village and Child-Caring Village program in Kricak Village. One of the main challenges is the limited number of volunteers, which makes it difficult to reach this program to lower levels, such as the RT and RW levels. For this reason, further collaboration is needed with community leaders, non-governmental organizations, and other parties who have the capacity to support the dissemination of information about this program to all levels of society. In addition, although there is support from community leaders, there are still cultural challenges, especially in dealing with patriarchal views that still exist in some circles of society. Some community members, especially men, may be less supportive of women's empowerment, so female volunteers face difficulties in voicing the rights of women and children.

Another challenge faced is the limited budget for program implementation. Nevertheless, the program continues to run with maximum efforts from the Department of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning in Yogyakarta and volunteers to overcome existing obstacles and continue empowerment activities with existing resources.

#### **1.5 Program Impact and Evaluation**

Since the Women-Friendly and Child-Caring Village program in Kricak Village is still in its early stages, there has been no comprehensive evaluation of the direct impact on the welfare of women and children. However, an increase in community knowledge about the importance of protecting women and children has been seen. Socialization carried out by Department of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning Yogyakarta City and volunteers has succeeded in increasing community awareness of issues related to women's and children's rights. The community also understands more about the steps to take in the event of violence or violations of women's and children's rights, as well as about places that can be accessed to get help.

In the long term, it is hoped that this program can create a more conducive environment for women and children in Kricak Village, as well as increase community participation in protecting their rights. Further evaluation will be needed after the planned programs are fully implemented to measure the impact of the program on reducing early marriage, violence against children, and empowering women as a whole.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Women-Friendly and Child-Caring Village Program in Kricak Village, Yogyakarta, which began on April 19, 2024, has successfully involved the community in creating a safe, inclusive, and caring environment for women and children. Through various stages, such as socialization, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), and training for Women and Children's Friends Volunteers, this program prioritizes interactive communication that connects the government, volunteers, and the community.

This two-way communication is important to increase public awareness of women's and children's rights and strengthen their participation in empowerment programs. Overall, interactive communication applied in the formation and implementation of the Women-Friendly and Child-Caring Village program in Kricak Village has proven effective in building public understanding and awareness of the importance of women's empowerment and child protection. Active participation from various community groups, such as housewives, fathers, teenagers, and community leaders, shows that there is broad support for this program. This program has empowered women through skills training and education on women's rights, and provided a space for teenagers to talk about the issues they face. Although there are challenges in implementation, such as limited volunteers and patriarchal cultural challenges, this program continues to try to overcome these obstacles. Although the program is still in its early stages, positive impacts have begun to be seen, especially in increasing public awareness of the protection of women and children. Further evaluation will be needed after full implementation to assess its impact on reducing early marriage, violence against children, and overall women's empowerment. The program is expected to create a safer and more conducive environment for women and children in the future. In addition, it can also provide recommendations for the development of policies for women-friendly and child-friendly villages in other areas.

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