

# Local Wisdom in PERCIK Advocacy, Public Communication Strategy

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## ABSTRACT

This research wants to find out how the "*Kearifan Lokal* (local wisdom)" used by PERCIK, as an independent public organization, upholds humanitarian and democratic values in carrying out every activity in one of the pillars, namely advocacy on the basis of locality. Qualitative research is able to understand the relationship between disciplines, across time and distance, between universal values originating from the Western world, and applied in a world that is different from the basis of locality. Data collection was carried out by conducting interviews through new media, distributing open instruments, observing participation, and finally conducting document studies. This study found that one of the pillars, namely advocacy, is a bridge that connects PERCIK to the public. Using intercultural communication to build communication with parties with diverse backgrounds is the right choice. Communication is important in activity management, from planning, organizing, implementing and post-advocacy activities. With trust, communication can be well established, and programs can work well in society, so that there is a change in opinion and behavior in the direction that has been planned by promoting human values and democracy. The aim of this research is to broaden the knowledge that kearifan lokal is very important for every stage in the public communication strategy used by NGOs in social work with the community.

**Keywords:** *Advocacy, Kearifan Lokal (Local Wisdom), PERCIK, Public Communication strategy.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The 1998 reformation brought changes and developments into politics and democracy for the better, with the reinforcement of public opinion, the freedom to form political parties, freedom of the press emerged and freedom to speak. [3]. Previously, public aspirations could be delivered by political parties. Political parties are no longer trusted to convey the aspirations of the Indonesian people. Political parties are only tools of political elites in the struggle for power, and not as tools to convey the aspirations of society which are expected to change lives for the better [4]. At that time civil society needs other channel, and therefore they chose Non Government Organization/NGO, because they are more trustable and idealistic.

NGO is one of non-profit civil society organizations, which is established independently by the community to "resolve" social issues or problems [26]. Every NGO is differentiated based on character, type of issue given attention, advocacy, research as orientation and level of operation, which pays attention to social issues. To be able to survive in the dynamics of the times, NGOs also have to prepare different strategies at different times. The dynamics

of communication to be able to survive is also shown in the strategy chosen in communicating, in order to achieve goals in survival. Easy to born, easy to fail it.

One of the NGOs that can survive was founded by a group of thinkers in Salatiga on February 1, 1996 [21]. It is the *Persemaian Cinta Kemanusiaan/ PERCIK*, working for legal aid and community organizing. As an social institution, PERCIK builds cooperative relations with many parties, both individuals and public.

Every communication has distinctive function and purpose; this is in line with what Uchjana expressed [5], that one of the goals of communication is social change and social participation, attitude change, opinion change and behavior change. As a process, communication may fail. The problems can occur at the level of the communicator, message, channel and communicant so that it has the potential to cause obstacles in carrying out communication actions. Effective communication [5] is determined by the choice of a communication strategy. Thus, it is very interesting to know how PERCIK chooses a public communication strategy in accordance with the vision and mission of the institution in achieving the fulfillment of one of the institution's pillars, namely advocacy so far.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several studies that have been carried out previously, which have tried to examine NGO's public communication strategies, an intercultural communication as an important part of the public communications strategies, including;

(1) *Rachmat Kartono and Halimatus Sadi'yah (2018)*.

This research finds that there is a collision between the communication strategies with local culture, around the company. Knowledge and adjustments to the surrounding environment also influence the goals and direction of the company. The company uses *kearifan lokal* in the way of communication, when making visits (*blusukan*), with Islamic concepts, such as *silaturahmi*, deliberation, *cangkrukan*, providing assistance. If a problem arises, the researcher finds that the method chosen to solve it is to prioritize a sense of brotherhood and deliberation.

More extensive research is still needed, so that the application of local wisdom in many public relations practices can be authenticated. PERCIK also uses *Kearifan lokal* as a way to communicate with civil society in every stage. The effectiveness of intercultural communication is important in the communication strategy.

(2) *Ari Purnia Roospondanwangi (2018)*. This study aimed to look at the communication strategy 'Bintari' in advocating for mangrove conservation in Tapak Tugurejo Semarang. The researcher wanted to explore the public participation of the people whos collaborating. The results showed that Bintari successfully developed the community, with a strategy of friendship and mentoring. The methodology used in conducting the research was qualitative one, with a case study method. Researchers also participated in research in one area, namely Tapak. The sampling technique used snow ball, with purposive sampling. Case study data analysis was used according to Laswell's theory, stating what in which channel to whom with that effect. The four stages of a communication strategy, planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating. Another strategy used is the Compliance Gaining Theory, which shows good results as a result, likes and friendship strategies, and gives gifts before asking for compliance. The communication element becomes important to the communication strategy used by Bintari. A structured and documented plan has not been found so that it can be used as a control that can be used in a strategy. PERCIK using the similarities of stage to do the programme, before starting, organizing and post-work. Communication is important to the strategy of programme. Community involvement in every activity stage indicates participation. Researchers also participated in activities conducted by PERCIK. The difference lies on the methodology used. Percik does not use the Compliance Gaining Theory.

## 3. METHODS

The approach used in this research was subjective-constructivist, because the reality occurring in the

communication strategy chosen by PERCIK is relative and applies according to the context in which the work area is carried out, which is influenced by the background and experience, context and time of the parties working together. This study emphasizes humanistic ethical and moral values in research so that a dialectical social reality occurs between the researcher and the social actors under study. Researchers also actively and intensively for approximately 15 years in one pillar of PERCIK, advocacy. As a participatory observation, to understand the communication patterns and interactions that occur. The findings of this study are specific and cannot be/ can be generalized [10]. Knowledge of PERCIK's public communication strategy is established through PERCIK's social reality/interaction with the public.

In this explanative type of qualitative research methodology, the researcher tries to connect local wisdom which is gradually discovered and selected to be used in the communication process to the parties and the public who have collaborated. This method is considered appropriate because it has a broader nature and is more inclined to view and to explain public communication management strategies, which have a humanitarian mission.

Data collection techniques should be in-depth face-to-face interviews with selected informants. However, interviews cannot be conducted in person, so indirect interviews (face-to-face) are carried out by sending questions via e-mail. As a note, this research was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic period of May-June 2020. Followed by telephone communication to deepen the data obtained. Informants are selected with the following criteria: have more than ten years of work experience, are the coordinator and implementer of the PERCIK advocacy program, and have knowledge of values in the implementation of PERCIK advocacy activities. Document study, through activity data, activity reports, is one of the sources of data collection. Constructivist qualitative data analysis is preceded by an attempt of revealing the belief value of the research subjects in disclosing the reality that occurred. The credibility of informants can be seen from the answers to questions about public communication strategies in PERCIK advocacy, based on the informants' knowledge and experience.

## 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

PERCIK is one of the Non Government Organizations, founded by lecturers and researchers, who chose to leave their academic career as a lecturer and researcher at a university located in Salatiga in 1996. Disagreeing with university policies, some lecturers and researchers established PERCIK as a joint forum that could accommodate their activities, work and togetherness. It is an institution starting with pioneering studies and research of local politics in Indonesia, according to the late Prof. Sutandyo Wignyosoebroto (Locality; p. IX). Looking at the history of the establishment of PERCIK, it is not the same as the establishment of other NGOs. PERCIK appeared because of the compulsion to survive. PERCIK, as an institution, pays attention to paradigmatic issues, local

realities and dynamics. Locality becomes PERCIK's representation. Locality during President Soeharto's administration was not allowed, or was really marginalized, because the government closed off access, space and locality movement, ignoring local realities and dynamics. Locality became an alternative knowledge and learning to penetrate the all-central paradigm at that time. PERCIK founders have background knowledge of local issues, from the research they have done before.

PERCIK's values of democracy and social justice are reflected in the long-term vision as follows: supporting the creation of civil society, through empowering democratic institutions and developing democratic values; encourage the community to raise awareness of the basics of plural community life and tolerance in all social life; pay attention to the basics of civil society, human rights, especially for people who have been weakened and marginalized from government services and the legal system.

To realize this vision, PERCIK created a mission focusing on three pillars: research, reflection and carry out an action/advocacy program aimed at the creation of democratic and social justice. The three pillars always use the basis of locality because locality is an important part of rolling out human and democratic values.

Through this Advocacy pillar, PERCIK is known by the Society of Salatiga. Advocacy [15] is an act to provide support or defense to a weak community. Advocacy activities can be carried out by individuals, groups, NGOs that have concerns about humanitarian problems.

Advocacy carried out by PERCIK, among others, is in the form of a legal aid program for marginalized groups, both in terms of financial, legal knowledge and other social aspects. Community Oriented Policing (COP), this program is designed to make the relationship between the police and the community closer. Stated, created by providing participatory supervision by the community to the National Police at the local level. The COP program is carried out in all areas of the Central Java Regional Police. The values of humanism are disseminated to the police officers who have been born and organized in a militarist way, so that the police in dealing with problems in society are also more humane. Strengthening human rights defenders, protecting human rights defenders, and also increasing the capacity of civil society organizations for the practice and principles of religious freedom, Conflict prevention programs, to strengthen and develop the values of pluralism and tolerance and encourage community participation to build interfaith network at the local level.

Donor was needed by PERCIK, but the institution also has the ability to decide whether the activities are suitable with the institution's vision and useful for the good society. Informant X2, also stated this in the description of the statement and opinion. Through the process of mentoring marginalized groups it has been found that

“The struggle that is carried out cannot be carried out by civilian institutions alone, it requires solutions to structural problems, and one of the institutions that has frequent touches and very broad authority is the police. Because they have very broad powers, the authority of the National

Police (the Indonesian National Police) also needs to be limited, and it is aware that the actions and duties of the police also understand that their performance is being highlighted by the public”.

The disclosure of program choices by informants is as follows. There was a dialogue process carried out with the needs of the community in the region. The description from informant X2 clearly showed that the community needed consultation and assistance law when it comes to water and environmental issues. The problem is about the land between the tourism developer, the land owner and cultivator. Knowledge of the history and importance of land for farmers is certainly not the same as the informant's background. The land's importance to investors and the government is not the same as that to farmers. It is important to start cooperation with finding out what the community really needs. The strategy chosen by PERCIK is to use the farmer communication style. The Farmer communication style found local wisdom in the formal and informal meeting between PERCIK and the farmer. It is the communication at rural area, with the nature of the people in the village, naive, unpretentious, what they are [5].

PERCIK's advocacy activities have four working steps starting with planning, conducting social analysis and mapping of actors who are supporting or suspected of being able to hinder the implementation of activities. The next stage is to build approaches and to reinforce individuals and networks that have been built and that are not well developed in the program area. Building relationships is also done with policy makers.

Building relationships for advocacy activities requires a communication strategy, because the most important thing is trust in Percik, the approach is carried out personally and or in meetings with stakeholders in the program location. Percik is introduced as an independent institution working on social issues, democracy and justice (Informant X1).

The target of communication is anyone, if the language community must be adapted to the community, if the government is a formal language, if communication is done with donors, and the communication is global vision and negotiates on certain lines (Informant X3).

Carrying out advocacy activities requires planning, or a communication strategy, according to Harold D Laswell, [14] who says what channel to whom is very influential in achieving the goals or mission of the institution. The communicator plays an important role in knowing the culture background that will be invited to cooperate. Communication can be informal in nature, through *dolan*, *anjangsana*, friendship or visiting the houses of key figures in the community. This informal communication is a form of communication using local customs or culture. That local wisdom can be found in every action and method of exchanging messages or body language used by communicators from Percik to communities around the work area.

Formal communication is carried out face-to-face with the public and policy makers, through audiences to policy

makers, Forum Group Discussions / FGDs, *Belajar bersama*, Workshop, Seminar. Informal communication is made through new media, as well as the telephone while the informal meeting happens.

A variety of parties working together have different backgrounds, ethnic groups, various religions, beliefs, various educational backgrounds, various areas of residence. That is, the strategy to communicate is important, so that no distortion occurs. Intercultural communication can be one of the tools used to bridge differences in cultural backgrounds between stake holders.

PERCIK's public communication strategy planning, especially advocacy, uses methods such as:

1. Need assessment or small research on the community to be addressed/who will be invited to collaborate, in order to know what the background of the target community is, so that communication can be carried out effectively. So that trust grows between the parties. As an institution that respects locality, all the backgrounds of the parties invited to cooperate are the main concern. Looking for the information from the local people, who have the possibility to work together. PERCIK is in Salatiga, but the advocacy work area is in another area, different geographic areas make the communication strategy chosen is also different.

2. Public figures/elites are individuals whose voice is heard by the public. To strengthen relationship by using intercultural communication. One of the PERCIK advocacies is the Community Oriented Policing/COP program. The tradition of the police, they have the vertical communication. The head leader of the area is more important person to meet it. Using the formal communication to make an arrangement with the leader, so the communication with the region will be affected. PERCIK uses the vertical communication, short-cut communication, going through to the police leader of Central of Java. The advocacy program stops it for two eras. This show that even the use of vertical communication is not working at that time.

Local custom including local language is important to advocacy. Percik also uses a language that was the same as the community's during the gathering. Working with the java people, PERCIK uses the Javanese. Working with the woman's group, cooking is an option to bridge between PERCIK and society. The form of communication used to foster trust is also the key to the communication that will be built, so that PERCIK's advocacy goals can run well and experience a minimum of distortion in communication. These local values can be in the form of tradition, native language, native religion, religion, work background, education, race, and ethnicity. Local wisdom and local values is an important element capable of strengthening social cohesion (Abdullah etc., 2008: 7). This was conveyed by one of the X2 sources who stated that

"The diversity of characters and backgrounds needs to be known, so that the substance of the communication, or the content of the communication message, can be understood by the audience".

Communication strategy with local knowledge, and using local wisdom, by respecting and giving space to local

knowledge is in line with PERCIK's goal of respecting locality.

Communication strategy is a plan and method used to communicate to the public / group of people who are formed because they are interested in certain issues and seek information about organizations related to certain issues. [28]. The communication strategy is the method chosen to communicate with a certain group of people who have certain information in common, so that communication goals are achieved.

In the implementation of PERCIK's advocacy activities, local wisdom can be seen from the involvement of the community in determining what activities to carry out, which are really needed. The decision-making process is a form of appreciation and trust in local values, because people know better what and how to organize activities. This is consistent with one of the assumptions found in face negotiation theory, which was put forward by Ting-Toomey. This theory is used in situations of interpersonal relationships wider by Goffman [24] means that this theory can also be used in small groups. As stated by one of the resource persons (X2) as follows,

"Trust needs to be built in various ways depending on the background of the parties to be invited to cooperate, for example when they want to carry out community policing advocacy activities in different Islamic areas, the communicators who approach come from the same religion, have knowledge of the development and denominations of the Islamic religion, and master the Islam's regulation on the books".

Differences in the backgrounds of the parties communicating in advocacy are also influenced by the presence of culture in it, culture influences the way of life of people and organizations, including the use of symbols, values, behavior and various aspects, that have different perspectives and interests [13].

Cultural performances are also carried out to disseminate programs, adapted to the locality and local wisdom of each working area so far, such as puppet shows, performing arts, performing dance activities, puppet shows, and film screenings played by community friends.

## 5. CONCLUSION

PERCIK, as an independent institution has a mission to develop democratic values and human rights. Through one of the pillars, advocacy on the basis of locality, it turns out that it also touches local wisdom from the collaborating parties, whether based on cultural wisdom, language wisdom, religious wisdom or different beliefs from one area of cooperation with another. Percik, as an independent institution, has a mission to develop democratic values and human rights. Through one of the pillars, advocacy on the basis of locality, it turns out that it also touches local wisdom from the collaborating parties, whether based on cultural wisdom, language wisdom, religious wisdom or different beliefs from one area of cooperation with another.

The public communication strategy use by PERCIK, starting from planning, organizing, implementing and post-advocacy activities, uses communication that can be understood, trusted by the communicating parties, because building trust is one way to achieve the goals of the advocacy program as planned.

Intercultural communication is very important knowledge in carrying out PERCIK advocacy activities, so that communication that is filled with local knowledge content minimizes the possibility of communication distortions that can cause the failure of the advocacy work program that has been planned. Cultural communication with face negotiation theory is to maintain the image by giving respect to the values of respect, respect for the interlocutor, in this case local wisdom is one of the options used to communicate with the public by Percik.

Advocacy activities are activities to fight for universal values, democracy, justice and human rights. The struggle for universal values was started by the first developed countries, or the western world, When values originating from the western world are to be carried out in the eastern world, including Indonesia, with different backgrounds, those who convey universal values must have local knowledge, wisdom about the values of the local community, so that advocacy activities with the aim of fighting for democratic values, justice and human rights can be accepted, can change opinions, behavior and provide benefits to the public.

This research is not a generalized form of research, and a broader research can be carried out on the use of local wisdom in communicating future NGO advocacy activities.

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