



Optimisation of the Role of the Red and White Cooperative through Community Socialisation in Gampong Payaroh Darul Imarah

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Abstract

This community service article discusses the optimisation of the Red and White Cooperative's role in improving community welfare through socialisation activities in Gampong Payaroh, Darul Imarah, Aceh Besar. The background of this study is the limited public understanding of cooperative functions and benefits, which leads to low participation in cooperative activities. Therefore, this program aims to increase awareness, knowledge, and community involvement in cooperatives to strengthen people's economies. The method used is participatory socialisation, including lectures, discussions, and question-and-answer sessions involving local residents, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) actors, and youth, and is supported by university lecturers and students. Before implementation, problem identification was conducted to assess the community's level of understanding. The results show that socialisation significantly improved public knowledge of cooperative principles, benefits, and operational systems. The cooperative is perceived as an effective tool for providing accessible capital, increasing income, supporting MSME development, and strengthening social solidarity. Community enthusiasm and willingness to participate also increased. The discussion highlights that cooperatives play a strategic role not only in economic empowerment but also in fostering collective values and local development. In conclusion, the socialisation of the Red and White Cooperative contributes positively to enhancing community understanding and participation, making it a potential instrument for inclusive and sustainable economic development.

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1. Introduction

Cooperatives play a significant role in strengthening community-based economic systems and improving their members' welfare. As people-oriented economic institutions, cooperatives operate based on principles of mutual assistance, democracy, and shared ownership, which distinguish them from profit-oriented enterprises [1], [2]. In Indonesia, cooperatives have long been recognised as one of the pillars of the national economy, contributing to inclusive growth and equitable resource distribution [3], [4]. However, despite their strategic importance, public understanding and participation in cooperative activities remain relatively low in many rural areas [5].

One of the government's initiatives to revitalise the cooperative movement is the establishment of the Red and White Cooperative, which aims to enhance economic independence and community

empowerment. This cooperative model is designed to provide accessible financial services, support micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and foster local economic resilience [6], [7]. Previous studies have shown that cooperatives can significantly improve members' income, provide employment opportunities, and strengthen social cohesion within communities [8], [9]. Nevertheless, the success of such programs largely depends on community awareness and active participation [10].

In many cases, limited knowledge about cooperative principles, benefits, and operational mechanisms has led to misconceptions among the public. Cooperatives are often perceived merely as savings and loan institutions, whereas their roles extend to various sectors such as trade, agriculture, and services [11], [12]. This lack of understanding contributes to low membership rates and suboptimal utilisation of cooperative services [13]. Therefore, educational interventions such as community socialisation are essential to bridge this knowledge gap and encourage participation [14].

Community service activities through socialisation programs have been widely recognised as effective approaches for disseminating knowledge and empowering local communities. These activities involve participatory methods, including lectures, discussions, and interactive sessions, which enable communities to understand better and engage with development programs [15], [16]. Furthermore, collaboration among universities, students, and local stakeholders is crucial to ensuring the success and sustainability of such initiatives [17].

The implementation of cooperative socialisation in rural areas, such as Gampong Payaroh, Darul Imarah, is particularly relevant given the community's economic potential and the presence of MSME actors. By providing comprehensive information on cooperative management, benefits, and participation mechanisms, socialisation activities can enhance community readiness to establish and manage cooperatives effectively [18], [19]. Moreover, such initiatives can foster a sense of ownership and collective responsibility among community members [20].

Empirical evidence suggests that socialisation programs not only improve knowledge but also influence attitudes and behavioural intentions toward cooperative participation [21], [22]. Increased awareness can lead to higher engagement levels, better financial management practices, and stronger local economic networks [23]. Consequently, optimising the role of cooperatives through structured socialisation is a strategic effort to promote sustainable community development [24], [25].

This study aims to analyse the effectiveness of socialisation activities in enhancing the Red and White Cooperative's role in improving community understanding, participation, and economic empowerment in Gampong Payaroh. The novelty of this study lies in its integrative approach, combining community service and empirical observation to assess both the educational impact and the community response to cooperative development. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on theoretical or macro-level analysis, this research emphasises a localised, participatory model that involves direct engagement with diverse community groups, including MSME actors, youth, and households, thereby providing practical insights into cooperative-based community empowerment.

2. Methodology

This study employed a community service-based participatory approach combined with descriptive qualitative analysis to optimise the role of the Red and White Cooperative through socialisation activities. The research was conducted in Gampong Payaroh, Darul Imarah District, Aceh Besar, involving residents as the primary participants.

The implementation began with a preliminary needs assessment to identify the community's level of understanding regarding cooperatives. This stage was carried out through informal observations, discussions with village officials, youth groups, and community members, as well as coordination with university students participating in community service (KKN). The findings indicated that a significant portion of the community had limited knowledge about the functions and benefits of cooperatives.

Following the needs assessment, the program moved to the planning stage, where materials on cooperative principles, organisational structure, benefits, and participation mechanisms were prepared. The socialisation strategy was designed using participatory methods to ensure active engagement from participants.

The core activity was the socialisation session, conducted through lectures, interactive discussions, and Q&A sessions. Participants included men, women, youth, and MSME actors from the village. The sessions were delivered by a team of lecturers from the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Abulyatama, supported by KKN students. The materials emphasised practical understanding, including cooperative management, savings-and-loan systems, and surplus distribution (SHU).

Data collection was conducted through direct observation, participant responses, and documentation during the activities. Qualitative data were analysed descriptively to assess changes in participants' understanding, attitudes, and interest in cooperative participation.

Finally, an evaluation and follow-up stage was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the socialisation. Indicators included participant enthusiasm, level of comprehension, and willingness to engage in cooperative activities. Recommendations were formulated, including strengthening community capacity, forming cooperative initiator groups, and providing ongoing assistance to ensure sustainable cooperative development.

3. Result & Discussion

The community service program in Gampong Payaroh, Darul Imarah, was implemented through a structured socialisation approach to enhance public understanding of the Red and White Cooperative. The activities began with identifying community needs, followed by the delivery of educational materials through participatory methods such as lectures, discussions, and question-and-answer sessions. The participants, comprising residents, MSME actors, youth, and community leaders, demonstrated high enthusiasm and active engagement throughout the program. This indicates that the topic addressed was relevant to the community's needs, particularly in relation to improving economic opportunities and financial independence.

The program's results demonstrate a significant improvement in participants' knowledge and awareness of the role and benefits of cooperatives. The socialisation activities not only clarified misconceptions about cooperatives but also highlighted their potential to provide accessible capital, support business development, and strengthen social solidarity. Furthermore, the discussions revealed an increased willingness among community members to participate in cooperative activities and support the establishment of the Red and White Cooperative in their village. These findings suggest that community-based socialisation plays a crucial role in fostering economic empowerment and promoting sustainable local development.



Figure 1. Gampong Payaroh Village Office and Community Facilities

The physical environment shown in **Figure 1** illustrates the strategic location and availability of public facilities in Gampong Payaroh, which are essential to supporting community-based development programs. The presence of the village office as an administrative centre reflects an organised governance system that facilitates coordination among local authorities and residents. Additionally, the surrounding infrastructure, including accessible roads, public buildings, and communal spaces, indicates that the village has adequate basic facilities to support social and economic activities. The existence of such facilities provides a conducive environment for implementing community empowerment programs, including cooperative development initiatives.

Furthermore, the availability of community spaces, such as the open field and nearby public buildings, serves as a vital platform for social interaction, meetings, and educational activities, including cooperative socialisation. These spaces enable effective communication and engagement between stakeholders, including village officials, community members, and external facilitators such as university teams. From a development perspective, the physical readiness of Gampong Payaroh suggests strong potential to establish and sustain the Red and White Cooperative. The combination of accessible infrastructure and active community participation creates a supportive ecosystem that strengthens local economic resilience and promotes sustainable, community-driven development.



Figure 2. Community Service Team and Local Participants in Gampong Payaroh

Figure 2 presents the community service team, comprising university lecturers and students, alongside local participants in Gampong Payaroh. This image reflects the program's collaborative nature, highlighting the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including academic institutions and the local community. The presence of students, particularly those participating in a community service program (CSP), demonstrates the role of higher education in facilitating knowledge transfer and community empowerment. Such collaboration is essential in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical implementation, especially in introducing cooperative concepts to the community.

Moreover, the interaction between the community service team and local participants indicates a positive level of engagement and mutual acceptance. The diverse composition of participants, including youth and community members, suggests inclusivity in the program implementation. This inclusiveness is crucial for ensuring that cooperative development initiatives are well understood and supported by various segments of the community. The image also reflects a sense of togetherness and shared commitment, which are fundamental values in cooperative principles. Therefore, this collaborative engagement contributes significantly to building trust, enhancing participation, and supporting the successful establishment of the Red and White Cooperative in Gampong Payaroh.

Figure 3 illustrates a discussion session between the community service team and local youth in Gampong Payaroh, which marks an essential stage in the program's implementation. This activity reflects a participatory approach, in which the team actively engages with community members to identify problems, exchange ideas, and explore potential solutions for cooperative development. The informal setting of the discussion encourages open communication, allowing participants to express their perspectives, concerns, and expectations regarding the establishment of the Red and White

Cooperative. Such interactions are crucial to ensuring the program aligns with the community's actual needs and conditions.



Figure 3. Discussion Session between the Community Service Team and Local Youth in Gampong Payaroh

Furthermore, the involvement of local youth in the discussion highlights their strategic role as agents of change in community development. Youth participation not only enhances the dissemination of information but also contributes to the sustainability of the program, as they can support future cooperative management and activities. The discussion session also serves as a platform for building trust and strengthening relationships between the community and facilitators. By fostering collaborative dialogue and mutual understanding, this activity significantly increases community readiness, awareness, and commitment to participate actively in cooperative initiatives, thereby supporting long-term economic empowerment in Gampong Payaroh.

Figure 4 illustrates the active participation of community members in the socialisation of the Red and White Cooperative in Gampong Payaroh. The image shows a diverse group of participants, including women, elderly individuals, and children, indicating that the program successfully reached various segments of the community. This level of participation reflects a strong interest and awareness among residents regarding the importance of cooperative development as a means of improving economic welfare. The inclusive nature of the activity demonstrates that the socialisation program was accessible and relevant to the broader community, rather than limited to specific groups such as business actors or local elites.

Moreover, the activity's setting, where participants gather in a communal space, highlights the role of social interaction in strengthening community engagement. The informal and comfortable environment encourages active listening, discussion, and knowledge sharing among participants. This atmosphere is essential in community service programs, as it fosters trust and openness, enabling individuals to understand cooperative concepts and their practical benefits better. The high level of attendance and attentiveness suggests that the socialisation activity was effective in increasing public awareness and motivation to participate in cooperative initiatives, thereby supporting the long-term sustainability of the Red and White Cooperative in Gampong Payaroh.

Figure 5 illustrates the continued engagement of community members during the Red and White Cooperative's socialisation activity in Gampong Payaroh. The image reflects a well-attended session where participants remain actively involved, indicating sustained interest throughout the program. The presence of various community groups, including women, youth, and families, underscores the activity's broad outreach and inclusiveness. This level of participation suggests that the information

delivered was relevant to the community's needs, particularly in relation to improving economic opportunities and strengthening local livelihoods through cooperative initiatives.



Figure 4. Community Participation in the Socialisation of the Red and White Cooperative in Gampong Payaroh



Figure 5. Community Engagement during the Red and White Cooperative Socialisation Activity in Gampong Payaroh

Furthermore, the interaction among participants and facilitators demonstrates an effective knowledge-sharing process in a conducive and participatory environment. The arrangement of participants in a collective setting encourages communication, discussion, and mutual learning, all essential elements of

community empowerment programs. The active engagement observed in this session indicates that the socialisation successfully fostered awareness, interest, and readiness among community members to support and participate in establishing the cooperative. Consequently, this activity contributes to building a strong foundation for the sustainability and success of the Red and White Cooperative as a community-based economic institution in Gampong Payaroh.

The novelty of this community service article lies in its integrative, participatory approach, which combines socialisation activities with direct community engagement to promote the Red and White Cooperative at the village level. Unlike conventional community service programs that primarily focus on one-way knowledge transfer, this study emphasises a collaborative model involving lecturers, students, and diverse community groups, including MSME actors, youth, and households. This approach not only enhances understanding but also fosters active participation and a sense of ownership among community members. Furthermore, the program specifically addresses the gap in public perception by repositioning cooperatives not merely as financial institutions but as comprehensive tools for economic empowerment and social solidarity. The contextual implementation in Gampong Payaroh provides practical insights into how localised, community-based strategies can effectively support cooperative development, making this study a valuable contribution to advancing sustainable, inclusive community empowerment practices.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that implementing a community-based socialisation program effectively enhances public understanding and awareness of the Red and White Cooperative's role and benefits in Gampong Payaroh, Darul Imarah. The participatory approach, involving lectures, discussions, and interactive engagement, successfully addressed the community's knowledge gap and increased their interest in cooperative participation. The findings indicate that cooperatives have significant potential to improve economic welfare by providing accessible financial services, supporting MSME development, and strengthening social cohesion. Furthermore, the active involvement of community members, youth, and local stakeholders highlights the importance of collaborative efforts in ensuring the success and sustainability of cooperative initiatives. The program not only improved knowledge but also fostered positive attitudes and readiness among participants to engage in cooperative activities. Therefore, the Red and White Cooperative can serve as a strategic instrument for promoting inclusive and sustainable economic development at the local level. Future efforts should focus on continuous capacity building, institutional strengthening, and ongoing assistance to ensure the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of cooperative development in the community.

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