



Efforts to Invest in Human Resources through Competence in order to Improve the Performance of Social Assistants of the Family Hope Program in Nias Regency

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Abstract

PKH (Program Keluarga Harapan/Family Hope Program) is one of the poverty reduction intervention efforts to realize social welfare for the community. The process of implementing the program requires Human Resources as the driving force of the program itself. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure the quality of human resources as PKH Social Assistants are one of the resources of social welfare providers employed by the Government to ensure PKH is implemented according to the provisions. This study aims to determine the efforts made in investing in human resources through strengthening competencies to PKH social assistants and identifying the impact of strengthening these competencies on the performance of PKH social assistants in Nias Regency. The method used was qualitative by interviewing 11 informants. The focus aspects of this study's competencies refer to the three basic components that a person must have in developing the profession of practitioners in the field of social welfare, namely knowledge, skills and values. This study concludes that there is an impact received by Nias Regency Social Assistants, namely increased insight, increased technical ability, and increased commitment to work so that in the implementation of daily work or the performance of PKH social assistants can be more improved or of higher quality.

KEY WORDS: Family Hope Program, Human Capital Investment, Competency, PKH Social Assistants , Nias Regency

1. INTRODUCTION

The government through the Directorate General of Social Protection and Security at the Ministry of Social Affairs since 2007 has launched the PKH (Family Hope Program) as one of the poverty reduction intervention efforts in Indonesia. The Ministry of Social Affairs (2020) explains that PKH is a program that provides conditional social assistance to poor and vulnerable families who are registered in the Integrated Social Welfare Data and

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designated as Beneficiary Families (p.10). In terms of implementing PKH, of course, it requires reliable human resources as technical implementers so that the program can be implemented properly as mandated in Article 33 of Law Number 13 of 2011 concerning Handling the Poor. Therefore, to ensure the quality of these workers, institutional and human investment is needed through increasing the capacity of reliable human resources. As also contained in Guidelines for the Implementation of the Family Hope Program in that PKH human resources must be managed professionally and continue to improve the quality of their competence as part of measurable and comprehensive professionalism. This is closely related to the performance of human resources, especially PKH Social Assistants in Nias Regency.

The potential of every human resource in the workplace must be utilized as well as possible so as to be able to provide optimal work output (Syahputra & Tanjung, 2020, p. 284). This is because human resources have a big share in determining the progress or development of an organization where they work. So that the progress of an organization is largely determined by the quality and capability of the human resources in it (Widjaja et al., 2018). The concept of human resource development in a macro context refers to efforts to provide various opportunities and resources needed for each individual in a society to improve their abilities. Investment in human resources is only possible if the individual resources have qualifications that are relevant to the needs of the organization concerned and have the desire to develop themselves creatively (Iskandar, 2018, p. 25).

The following is data on the number of PKH Social Assistants in Nias Regency over the past eight years as follows:

Table 1 Number of PKH Social Assistants in Nias Regency

| No | Year | Number of Social Assistants at the beginning of the year | Not renewed Contract | Resign | Work Area Mutation |
|----|------|--|----------------------|----------|--------------------|
| 1 | 2017 | 40 people | 3 people | | |
| 2 | 2018 | 46 people | - | 2 people | - |
| 3 | 2019 | 44 people | 2 people | 1 person | - |
| 4 | 2020 | 41 people | - | - | - |
| 5 | 2021 | 42 people | - | 1 person | - |
| 6 | 2022 | 41 people | - | 1 person | - |
| 7 | 2023 | 32 people | - | - | 12 people |





| | | | | | |
|---|------|-----------|---|---|--|
| 8 | 2024 | 32 people | - | - | |
|---|------|-----------|---|---|--|

Source: PKH Data Base Nias Regency (2024)

The table above shows the number of PKH Social Assistants in Nias Regency which fluctuates every year until in 2024 there was a drastic decrease in the number leaving 32 PKH Social Assistants in the Regency area. Nias Regency. The cause of the decline is caused by first, the results of the PKH Human Resources Performance Assessment Evaluation carried out at the end of each year with the final result of the assessment in the form of a recommendation for the extension of the work contract or not extended in the following year; second, direct resignation by the workers themselves; and third, the mutation of work areas carried out by the Ministry of Social Affairs on a large scale in early 2023.

In relation to human investment, the study R. Siregar (2017) concluded that human resources have an important role in the development of a country so that it is very necessary to improve the quality of Human Resources as an investment in development. Therefore, competence is the most basic thing that must be owned by an employee to enable someone to realize work-related tasks needed to achieve goals. Wibowo (2012) also explains that the number of competencies owned and used by human resources will improve performance. The main focus to see aspects of competence in this study is to refer to the opinion of Zastrow (2010) in Adi (2013), which consists of knowledge, skills, and values as this is also relevant and with the competency standards of Social Workers contained in Law Number 14 of 2019 concerning Social Workers where Social Workers and Social Assistants are part of the human resources for handling the poor.

Therefore, the researcher intends to further deepen information regarding human resource investment in efforts to improve the performance of PKH social assistants in Nias Regency. This research has a gap with previous studies that focus more on assessing the performance of human resources by combining aspects other than human resource investment and competence, but this research will examine more specifically the various things that are done to support their competence. The more qualified human resources, it is expected that their performance will also increase so that it can have an impact on the achievement of the program objectives themselves towards a better direction.

2. METHODS

The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach. According to Rubin and Babbie (2011), the qualitative approach aims to explore information in more depth from certain informants so that the data obtained becomes richer. This is considered in





accordance with the objectives of the researcher who will present more specific information related to how efforts to invest in human resources through competence to improve the performance of PKH social assistants in Nias Regency. Therefore, the type of research used is descriptive. According to Neuman (2014) that descriptive research presents a specific detailed description of a situation, social setting, or relationship (p.38). This descriptive qualitative approach can assist researchers in presenting data that contains holistic and in-depth meaning obtained from research subjects who understand the issues and settings being studied. The experience of each research subject will provide a variety of information that will later be analyzed and produce data that is truly relevant to the phenomena experienced by the research subjects.

This research was conducted at the Nias Regency Family Hope Program Implementation Unit. This location was chosen to be the focus of the research because the first consideration refers to the results of the end-of-year evaluation assessment, the component of which has an element of PKH human resource competence, which if seen from the phenomenon at the research location, there have been proposed recommendations not to extend the work contract in the following year. Furthermore, the second consideration is that PKH social assistants are human resources who are one of the main drivers of this program so that if the quality of human resources is low, it will also have an impact on the difficulty of achieving the objectives of the program.

As for the selection of samples, the researcher uses *purposive sampling* technique, which means that the determination of informants is based on criteria that have been determined by the researcher. Therefore, this technique requires researchers to have good skills and knowledge of the research population in order to ensure that the informants they will select can actually provide information in accordance with the research problem. Furthermore, researchers used data collection techniques with document studies, in-depth interviews, and observation. Researchers in this case interviewed 11 informants, consisting of ten PKH social assistants in Nias Regency who represented each sub-district and a PKH coordinator in Nias Regency.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Efforts to Invest in Human Resources through Strengthening the Competence of PKH Social Assistants in Nias Regency

In this research, the competency components that are the focus of human investment efforts for PKH Social Assistants in Nias Regency consist of three aspects, namely knowledge, skills and values with the field findings as follows:





a. Strengthening competence through knowledge aspects

Midgley (2013) states that education today does not only have connotations limited to formal education but has experienced many developments in human resource policies. Therefore, the discussion on the knowledge aspect in this study refers to the insights or concepts possessed by PKH Social Assistants related to their field of work, namely various policies of the Family Hope Program and other relevant social service information. This is certainly an initial capital to guide technical implementation or action at the next stage. Researchers identified that there are four efforts made to strengthen this aspect of knowledge.

First, the recruitment of PKH human resources according to the qualifications of the program needs. One of the requirements for recruiting PKH social assistants is a minimum educational qualification of D-III in all majors but still prioritizing Social Work / Social Welfare / Social Science majors. The knowledge gained while studying in college can certainly have an impact both directly and indirectly on current work. This is in accordance with the results of the researchers' interviews with informants who stated that the knowledge gained while in college previously had some effect and some answered that it had no effect at all.

Table 2 Recap of informant information based on education level

| NO | INFORMANT | EDUCATION LEVEL | JUDGEMENT |
|----|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | FH, S.TH, S.Pd.K | S1 | THEOLOGY |
| 2 | OM, SE | S1 | MANAGEMENT |
| 3 | CZ, S.Pd | S1 | ENGLISH EDUCATION |
| 4 | BM, A.Md | DIII | COMPANY MANAGEMENT |
| 5 | AT, S.Si | S1 | CHEMISTRY |
| 6 | MH, S.Sos | S1 | SOCIAL WELFARE SCIENCE |
| 7 | JB, A.Mk | DIII | NURSING |
| 8 | TL, S.Pd | S1 | PANCASILA AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION |
| 9 | NW, S.Pd.SD | S1 | PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER EDUCATION |
| 10 | AL, S.Pd | S1 | BIOLOGY EDUCATION |
| 11 | YL, S.Pd | S1 | BIOLOGY EDUCATION |

Source: Research Results (2024)





It is known that based on the level of education and majors taken while in college from the eleven informants interviewed, only one of them has a Social Welfare Science education background, which means that the only PKH social assistant whose scientific relevance is most related to current work because it involves poverty and empowerment for the poor.

Second, exchanging information with fellow PKH human resources. Information exchange in this case occurs between fellow PKH Social Assistants and between PKH Social Assistants and superiors, namely the PKH Coordinator of Nias Regency. The Nias Regency PKH Coordinator has the responsibility to forward all information developments hierarchically. They exchange this information by asking each other and through whatsapp groups. This makes it easier for them to obtain information more quickly and easily.

Third, finding out information from social media. Another effort made by PKH Social Assistants to increase knowledge about their work is to utilize information from various social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and the official website of the Ministry of Social Affairs. According to the informants, the utilization of social media can be used as an effort to increase information as long as the selection of mandatory sources is credible or reliable.

Fourth, the implementation of knowledge competency development activities. Based on the results of interviews with informants, the activities in question are technical guidance, training, and seminars which are usually organized by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Before the covid 19 pandemic occurred, all Bimtek and Diklat activities were carried out directly face-to-face at one location. However, after covid 19 appeared, these activities were partly carried out online or *online*. The main focus in organizing these activities is to add insight or information to PKH social assistants around PKH policies.

b. Strengthening competence through skills aspects

The skill aspect in this study is defined as the proficiency, expertise, and ability possessed from the practice of knowledge. In simple terms, the skills here are the implementation of the knowledge possessed as in the previous explanation. Knowledge in the form of a context of understanding the implementation of the Family Hope Program which will then be realized in the form of action by PKH Social Assistants where it requires practical skills. This can be realized especially by attending training so that both learning materials and implementation practices can be in line. According to Rivai (2015), training is an important part of the educational process in which there is a short-term learning process with the aim of improving knowledge, attitudes and skills, so as to increase individual





competence in carrying out their work which is expected to have an impact on achieving the goals of the organization where they work. Therefore, training is very important in activities to improve current performance and future performance.

Researchers identified that there are four efforts made to strengthen this aspect of skills, namely first, coordinating with the Social Service, PMD, P2A of Nias Regency. PKH social assistants make independent efforts to improve the quality or variety of skills in order to better master their work. Coordinating with the Nias Regency Social, PMD, P2A Office is inseparable in the work activities of PKH human resources. This is because PKH human resources are under the supervision of the Nias Regency Social, PMD, P2A Office, which is a representative of the Regional Government in coordinating the entire PKH implementation in the Nias Regency area. The Nias Regency Social, PMD, P2A Office also plays a role in providing year-end performance assessments to all PKH human resources.

Second, watching videos of other facilitators' activities. Another effort that is part of the efforts made by PKH Social Assistants in improving their work skills is to watch videos of mentoring activities carried out by other facilitators spread across social media. The benefits of watching videos of PKH activities on various social media. According to the informants, this is related to innovations made by other PKH social assistants outside Nias Regency which can be a reference to be applied to their daily work which is considered appropriate to field conditions.

Third, carrying out activities together with other assistants. As is known, each PKH social assistant has their own working area, which is based on the division of village areas. This means that actually each Social Facilitator only needs to be responsible for carrying out tasks in their respective village areas. However, as an effort to gain a variety of experiences, PKH Social Assistants are willing to participate in their colleagues' work areas to see the other side of their colleagues' work methods that they can reapply in their areas when working alone later. This also shows a group work behavior with the aim of helping each other.

Fourth, the implementation of skills competency development activities. Based on the results of interviews with informants, the activities in question are training, *coaching* and certification organized by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Social, PMD, P2A Office of Nias Regency. The main focus in organizing these activities is to add insight or information to PKH social assistants and to train them on how to implement it in the form of direct practice or work simulations. In this activity, the knowledge provided is usually not only about PKH policies but other relevant social services. Selajan with the opinion of Susan (2019) who states that human resources are productive individuals who work as drivers in organizations that function as assets so that their abilities must be developed through





training. (Siregar et al., 2022, p. 66). In addition, to ensure the quality of competence possessed by all PKH social assistants, the Ministry of Social Affairs currently requires all PKH social assistants to be certified. The certification is facilitated by the Ministry of Social Affairs which is carried out by the Social Worker Professional Certification Institute.

Based on these four efforts, it can be said that a field worker does not only master knowledge or information about his work, but must be balanced with practical skills. This is in line with Adi's (2013) opinion that everyone who provides social services, especially in professional practice, is obliged to make efforts to continuously renew competencies, both additional knowledge and real training (practice) to deal with their clients at the individual, family, group and community levels (p.80).

c. **Strengthening competence through value aspects**

The value aspect in this study is associated with the implementation of the basic values in the PKH Human Resources Code of Ethics. These values serve as guidelines in behaving, conducting, and acting while carrying out their work as PKH Social Assistants. The PKH Human Resources Code of Ethics includes obligations, prohibitions, and relationship ethics based on the values of courtesy, integrity, and professionalism. Pincus and Minahan (1973: 38) in Adi (2013: 80) define values as beliefs, preferences or assumptions about what humans want or consider good. These values can determine a person's attitudes and actions in interacting with others.

Based on the results of the interviews, there are several efforts to strengthen value competencies in supporting performance as PKH social assistants: first, the application of the basic values of PKH human resources while at work. According to the informants, the value of courtesy emphasizes on how to communicate well and in harmony with actions in order to create a good relationship with every party related to the implementation of work in PKH. Furthermore, the value of integrity is associated with the honesty of social assistants in conveying information and maintaining the confidentiality of work information. The last basic value is professional. Researchers concluded that this value is associated with an attitude of obeying work regulations including carrying out all obligations and job demands and not linking other interests outside the work relationship.

Second, verbal notification. Verbal notification is a simple way that is most often done by program implementing agencies in providing reinforcement to their workers. The PKH Coordinator of Nias Regency as the supervisor of PKH social assistants said that the value reinforcement was carried out both directly when meeting face-to-face with the assistants and indirectly through communication media intermediaries which was carried out





repeatedly to prevent problems from occurring due to actions that were not in accordance with the rules.

Third, notification in writing. Researchers managed to identify that the intended written notification is divided into two types, namely notifications that prevent violations or reinforcement in the form of material related to the PKH human resources code of ethics and both warning letters as a form of sanction after committing a violation. Notification efforts both verbally and in writing are an effort to warn all PKH social assistants in Nias Regency so that in carrying out their work they continue to guide and implement the basic values stipulated in the PKH human resource code of ethics. As in the Technical Guidelines for PKH Human Resource Management by the Ministry of Social Affairs (2020) which states that "*the application of sanctions is given to human resources who violate the performance and Code of Ethics for PKH human resources to maintain the smooth and quality implementation of the Family Hope Program (p.30)*".

3.2 Impact of HR Investment through Strengthening the Competence of PKH Social Assistants in Nias Regency

The various human resource investment efforts that have been made as described earlier certainly have an impact on the PKH social assistants in Nias Regency, where at least researchers have succeeded in identifying three things, namely first, increased insight. One of the impacts of strengthening competence is to increase insight because of the renewal of knowledge, thus increasing the accuracy of information about their work. This helps PKH social assistants when facing challenges or work problems where good knowledge will be able to help them determine the right steps according to applicable regulations in solving these problems.

Second, technical skills increase. Efforts to strengthen competencies, especially in the aspect of skills, are very helpful in working as a field officer. Knowledge that has been possessed in theory or concept must of course be implemented, so this can only be realized if accompanied by technical skills. In particular, informants emphasized the impact of technical skills in terms of better and more interesting communication as PKH social assistants often meet many people. In addition, other personal skills in terms of managing Beneficiary Family data through the SIKS-NG application.

Third, increased commitment to work. The application of PKH's basic values is able to provide an anticipation in themselves not to violate the rules or prohibitions that are not allowed in work. Thus, they are more committed in carrying out their work so that the leadership's assessment of their performance is not below the standard value at the end of the year assessment.





3.3 Competency Improvement Suggestions

Researchers also identified suggestions from PKH social assistants as considerations for program organizers in improving the quality of human investment in PKH social assistants in Nias Regency in the future. These efforts are certainly expected to have an impact on improving their performance so that the family hope program in the Nias Regency area can be better implemented.

a. Addition of supporting equipment facilities

The implementation of duties as PKH Social Assistants will certainly be maximized if supported by complete facilities so that it can facilitate their work. The provision of supporting equipment is very useful, especially when carrying out one of the routine tasks every month, namely the Family Capacity Building Meeting. This activity will feel boring if the technical implementation is carried out in the same way continuously, namely the delivery of material verbally only. However, with the help of additional equipment such as flipcharts, speakers, nFokus, or other props, it can give a more interesting impression to the beneficiary families. This is in line with the mandate in Article 32 of Law Number 11 of 2009 concerning Social Welfare which states that Social Welfare Implementation Resources include human resources; infrastructure; and funding sources.

b. Implementation of competency development activities on a regular basis

The implementation of routine activities referred to by the informants refers to various activities to improve the quality of human resources such as seminars, training, or technical guidance that can provide knowledge or technical training experience directly for PKH Social Assistants. This is in order to update their current competencies to be more *up-to-date with* the latest information or policy changes in PKH. Activities organized directly by the Ministry of Social Affairs as the institution responsible for implementing PKH / their leaders are considered to have more power in requiring each Facilitator to take part in the training / technical training / seminar activities.

According to Becker (1964), it is more important to invest in improving skills and knowledge and training programs for employees than investing in physical capital. This means that organizations must provide skills and knowledge and need to conduct training and development of human resources on a regular and mandatory basis. (Roosje Kalangi, 2015, p. 2-8).. This opinion is in line with the results of researchers' interviews with informants that the implementation of activities such as seminars, training, and technical assistance is still relatively rare, even though they stated that they really wanted this activity





to be carried out regularly at least 1-2 times a year for each assistant. Especially since covid 19, this activity is more often carried out online or via zoom so that when there are practical demands they can only video their own simulations. In addition, they also said that they really need training on the management of Beneficiary Family data which is currently managed through the SIKS-NG application.

These activities have actually been included in efforts to increase the capacity of PKH Human Resources which are regulated in the Technical Guidelines for PKH Human Resources Management by the Ministry of Social Affairs (2020) which consists of first, technical guidance including technical guidance on PKH Human Resources; other technical guidance as needed, and stabilization guidance. Second, education and training which includes basic training and Education and Training for Family Capacity Building Meetings (P2K2) (p.45-47).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that human investment efforts made to PKH social assistants in Nias Regency are something that must be done to the organizers of a program. This is considered important as PKH social assistants in Nias Regency are part of the organizers of handling the poor in Indonesia as stated in Article 33 of Law Number 13 of 2011 concerning Handling the Poor, which states that one of the human resources as the organizers of handling the poor is assistants and further refers to Guidelines for the Implementation of the Family Hope by the Ministry of Social Affairs (2021) states that PKH human resources must be managed professionally and continue to improve the quality of their competence as part of measurable and comprehensive professionalism because human resources are an important component in the success of organizational goals can be achieved (p.48).

Therefore, the focus of efforts to improve competence in question will consist of three aspects, namely knowledge, skills and values with the following field findings:

- a. Strengthening competence through the knowledge aspect. The main focus is an effort to improve and update the insights and concepts possessed by PKH Social Assistants in Nias Regency related to their field of work, namely the implementation of the Family Hope Program and other relevant information. This is certainly an initial capital to guide technical implementation or action in the next stage. The efforts that have been made so far consist of four things, namely the recruitment of PKH human resources according to the qualifications of program needs, exchanging information with fellow PKH human resources, finding out information from social media, and implementing





- knowledge competency development activities (technical guidance, training, and seminars).
- b. Strengthening competencies through the skills aspect. The main focus is an effort to improve the expertise of PKH social assistants in Nias Regency in applying the knowledge they have. This means that the knowledge possessed related to the Family Hope Program is then realized in the form of action by PKH Social Assistants in Nias Regency, which requires practical skills. The efforts that have been made so far consist of four things, namely strengthening competence through skills aspects, coordinating with the Social Service, PMD, P2A Nias Regency, watching videos of other facilitators' activities, carrying out joint activities with other facilitators, and implementing skills competency development activities (training/coaching/certification).
 - c. Strengthening competencies through the values aspect. The main focus is the effort to implement the basic values of the PKH Human Resources Code of Ethics. These values serve as guidelines for attitude, behavior, and action while carrying out their work as PKH Social Assistants in Nias Regency. The PKH Human Resources Code of Ethics includes obligations, prohibitions, and relationship ethics based on the values of courtesy, integrity, and professionalism. The efforts that have been made so far consist of three things, namely the application of the basic values of PKH Human Resources while at work (courtesy, integrity, professionalism), verbal notification, written notification.
 - d. The existence of human investment efforts through strengthening competencies as previously described can be concluded to have an impact on Nias Regency Social Assistants, namely increased insight, increased technical ability, and increased commitment to work so that in the implementation of daily work or the performance of PKH social assistants can be more improved or more qualified.

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