

ARTICLE

## Optimizing Regional Development Policies through the RT Keren Program to Support Community Empowerment (Study in Blitar City)

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify and analyze the optimization of regional development policies through the RT Keren program to support community empowerment in Blitar City. This optimization is related to applying transformative ideas and answers to sustainable development programs or SDGs. The research method used is descriptive with a qualitative approach. The results show that government development policies involving community participation through a community empowerment approach positively impact people's lives by providing training and improving the community's economy. Development policy through the minor structure in the region, namely the RT, is a form of policy that impacts all elements of society, such as improving the quality of community life through community groups (POKMAS). Hence, this research will present empirical evidence about the indicators of transformative leadership within community empowerment initiatives while also examining the efficacy of regional development policies outlined in the vision of Blitar City, specifically the Blitar Keren initiative. One notable manifestation of this vision is the RT Keren program.

## A. INTRODUCTION

Development planning is a form of policy planning that determines and regulates public problems to achieve shared prosperity. Law Number 25 of 2004 concerning the National Development Planning System explains that the goal of national development is to create an advanced, independent, and just nation as the basis for the following stages of development within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Growth can be started from the smallest area, namely RT (*Rukun Tetangga*). According to Pamirah (2017), RT is an institution formed through local community deliberations in the context of government and community services determined by the Village Government or Village Head or Lurah (Consider changing *Lurah* to Head of the Village) in Indonesia.

According to Syafar (2018), the State's achievement in the development plan is facilitated by implementing Law No. 17 of 2007, which aims to promote equitable development by enhancing regional development. Therefore, regional development is in the physical scope and the preparation of empowerment programs.

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The achievement of progress in development is intrinsically linked to the implementation of policies that serve as alternative approaches. These policies are designed to address and reduce ecological harm, potentially benefiting human activities, particularly within the specified region (Syafar, 2018). One of the empowerment programs in the areas can be seen in the context of the empowerment program in Blitar City through the “RT Keren” Program.

As Nugroho (2014) asserted, the execution of policy holds the utmost significance in guaranteeing the efficacy of an approach in attaining its objectives. Moreover, according to Lumintang's (2015) study, it is proposed that the commencement of development should originate at the grassroots level, specifically within rural communities. Nevertheless, the development process encounters various challenges, specifically concerning the availability of skilled personnel and financial resources allocated to rural communities.

Azhar (2015) said that in addition to human resource constraints and budgetary resources, there are other problems, namely that people's aspirations have not been appropriately accommodated, aspirations are processed and accommodated, but implementation has not been optimal. Furthermore, development planning deliberations have not been carried out properly, supported by the results of research conducted by Alfiaturrahman (2016), which states that development planning deliberations (*Musrenbang*) in Pelalawan Regency have not been carried out, especially at the stage where the community has not been involved in deciding priority activities to be delivered, and implemented by the district government.

According to Blitar Mayor Regulation Number 46 of 2021, community empowerment through the Blitar Keren Program aims to increase community participation and mobilize community potential at the village level in regional development. Catur (2020) suggests several things that local governments do in developing regions through an empowerment process, including recognizing regional potential, building the local economy of the community, as well as fostering farmer groups, the business world, and youth.

The RT Keren Program, which is the Mayor of Blitar's Program, aims to explore and empower the potential of the community through the smallest government, namely the scope of RT and RW (*Rukun Warga*), to realize development planning. The RT Keren program is a neighbour-based Development Pillar (RT) as an effort to learn community empowerment development. Still, in its implementation, it does not only rely on government officials but also the community. In its performance, the community must actively foster the collective awareness of a positive attitude to achieve development. Of course, it will be related to the issue of public trust, which is very important for the success of leadership and participation in the public sector. This development program will be a forum for the community to see leaders' performance through their programs, especially RT Keren.

Blitar City has various obstacles in its development efforts, especially in poverty alleviation. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of East Java Province, Blitar City is ranked the 2nd poorest city in East Java out of 9 cities in East Java. Meanwhile, Blitar Regency occupies the 5th position out of 29 regencies in East Java. Another problem in the City and Regency of Blitar is the problem of the development gap between the northern and southern regions, so development is carried out unevenly.

The implementation of development initiatives in Blitar should be synchronized, encompassing both urban and rural areas and fostering reciprocal support. According to Government Regulation Number 3 of 2010, Kanigoro Regency has been officially designated as the capital of Blitar Regency in the southern region. Nonetheless, a shortage of substantial, enduring strategies exists concerning mitigating the development gap.

Some of the problems above have now been tried to overcome by the Blitar City Government through increased physical and non-physical development. For non-physical ones, one of them is the development and empowerment of human resources, one of which is RT

Keren. RT Keren is one of the efforts to improve the development sector from the lower level, namely the RT level.

The RT Keren program is part of the policy implementation through a community empowerment approach. As mentioned in the activity "*Bincang Keren Walikota Blitar in 2021*". The RT Keren program is part of the implementation of the vision of the new regional head, namely "A Cool, Superior, Prosperous and Dignified City of Blitar". Development based on the Rukun Tetangga is an effort to realize the development of community empowerment. In its implementation, the community must participate actively to foster a collective awareness of a positive attitude to achieve development. As stated above, development through various development programs is an embodiment of transformational leadership, which according to [Suryono \(2011\)](#) leadership is one of the elements determining the success of an organization. So public sector leadership cannot be separated from the process of running a public organization.

The policy direction of the Blitar City Government can be established through the analysis of strategic issues. A strategic point refers to a condition that holds the potential to become a problem or an opportunity for the area in the future, even if it is not currently a problem. These issues can be categorized as strategic if they have the potential to develop into significant regional challenges at a certain point. Furthermore, strategic issues can also encompass untapped regional potentials that, if properly managed, can serve as valuable development assets.

The strategic issues of Blitar City in 2020 namely, regional head election, the demand for the provision of quality and character human resources, food security, acceleration of economic growth, declining social values, commitment to regional action plans in eradicating corruption, energy and water resource security, income inequality, and gender mainstreaming (RKPD Blitar City, 2020).

Community empowerment is a development process in which the community has the initiative to initiate a process of social activity to improve their situation and condition. Community empowerment activities can occur when the community itself also participates. Four principles are often used to make empowerment programs successful, namely, the principles of equality, participation, sustainability, and independence. [Maryani & Roselin \(2019\)](#) The leadership of the Mayor of Blitar, with a term of office in 2020–2024, has the concept of community empowerment and focuses on RT as a driving force in community empowerment.

As stated by [Usman \(2009\)](#), the successful implementation of government policies necessitates integrating social awareness and efficient work relationship management. Implementing this policy pattern is expected to produce favourable effects on subordinates, cultivating values and convictions congruent with the organization's objectives.

Therefore, this study aims to identify and analyze the optimization of regional development policies through the RT Keren program to support community empowerment in Blitar City. This optimization is related to applying transformative ideas and answers to sustainable development programs or SDGs (Sustainable Development and Goals).

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to [Ali \(2014\)](#), optimization means achieving the desired results. Achieve optimization requires more and maximum effort so that the desired goals can be realized as desired. So if the government wants to learn development policies through community empowerment, it must optimize its realization effectively and efficiently.

The attainment of development goals is facilitated by implementing the RT Keren program, which places significant emphasis on the active involvement of the community as the

primary driving force. The successful implementation of the RT Keren program necessitates establishing a comprehensive set of rules that effectively design and facilitate its execution. This set of regulations functions as an alternative designation for development policy.

The policy itself can be interpreted as an outline of the concept or plan used to accomplish what is intended to be realized. Meanwhile, development is a transformation process from time to time characterized by structural changes, one of which is from an economic perspective. So it can be concluded that development policy is a concept and rules prepared to realize increased development. According to [Huang et al. \(2021\)](#), optimizing programs through policies can use a community program approach, especially in developing human and economic resources.

According to [Musa \(2017\)](#), in his research, it is stated that the government must also play an active role so that development policies can be realized by what is desired. According to [Tahir \(2015\)](#), in the concept of development, the government must be better at implementing the idea of good governance, which consists of the government, the community and the private sector because the current process does not pay attention to input from the community and is exacerbated by the activities of the private sector carrying out development without having a grand strategy. So that development seems to be controlled only by certain parties. The government is the holder of power and authority for regulating economic, social and political activities and can move the community with all development policies that have been planned. So here, it is not only the government that plays a role in realizing development but also the community through community empowerment programs. This community empowerment program has been achieved through implementing policies in the RT Keren program, which has been implemented in the Blitar area. Too many studies have resulted in rural SMEs' main problem is obtaining adequate development funds to grow and develop ([Murray et al., 2012](#); [Jan & Can, 2011](#); [Venckuvenc & Snieska, 2014](#)).

[Yunus \(2008\)](#) similarly conveyed that providing financial resources is an inherent entitlement for all individuals. The banking industry is pivotal in enabling individuals and businesses to obtain substantial financial resources. Significant progress can be attained by facilitating the expansion of operations and improving community well-being for micro and small business actors ([Aristanto, 2019](#)).

Community empowerment is more emphasized if the existing community does not act as the object of various existing development projects but as the subject of the development effort itself. Community empowerment can be interpreted as an effort to restore or improve a community's ability to act according to their dignity in carrying out their rights and obligations as community members. The realization of community empowerment can be achieved by establishing five main principles, namely (1) a bottom-up approach, (2) participation, (3) the concept of sustainability, (4) integration, and (5) social and economic benefits. In his research, [Sururi \(2017\)](#) explains that community empowerment can be carried out correctly to achieve development if the five principles can be appropriately implemented. The Blitar local government implements community empowerment programs through the RT Keren program to achieve better growth. It will have an impact on improving the welfare of the community. So community empowerment programs are essential so people can prosper economically and in other ways.

According to [Aristanto \(2019\)](#), the higher the regional leadership's concern for the community empowerment agenda, the more focused regional leadership programs will be, followed by an increase in APBD allocations. However, it is undeniable that the limited human resources of local government officials also support the success of the planned programs and activities. Often programs and activity plans are well structured, but their implementation is not as expected due to limitations in translating the program or inadequate implementation capacity. [Aristanto \(2019\)](#) also mentions that APBD expenditure is essential in implementing development activities. Through APBD expenditure, local governments can carry out service

functions to the community, either directly or indirectly. Regional Budget Expenditures for Cooperatives and MSMEs are expenditures the Cooperatives and MSMEs Office uses for routine affairs and programs.

According to the Village Head and Village Apparatus, as elements of village government, village government policies are embedded in village institutions as a form of democracy in village governance. The approach is the government's choice to do something or not based on conclusions or recommendations. As a process, policy refers to how organizations know their programs and mechanisms to achieve their products as a framework. The approach is a process of bargaining and negotiation to formulate problems and methods-development of the Public Policy Implementation Model (Abidin, 2012).

The Village Head and Village Apparatus bear the responsibility of undertaking a range of tasks, encompassing the preparation of materials for the formulation of technical policies, the exploration and utilization of the community's economic potential, the supervision of development administration, the management of community service, and the collection of materials for proposed activities. The duties of these individuals also encompass the execution of support activities derived from research discoveries, specifically within the domain of community and social empowerment initiatives (Solekhan, 2012; Kurniawan, 2015).

Empowerment of rural communities aims to encourage the creation of independent community institutional strengths and capabilities, able to manage themselves based on the community's needs and overcome the challenges of problems in the future. The empowerment of village communities is contingent upon the possession of fundamental elements, as outlined by Theresia et al. (2014): (1) Regions characterized by diverse attributes, including geographical location, land area, topography, soil composition, hydrological conditions, and other pertinent factors; (2) The population encompasses a range of demographic attributes that reflect the characteristics of a society, including population size, birth and mortality rates, distribution and density patterns, sex ratio, population composition, and overall population quality; and (3) The way of life within a society is intricately intertwined with its customs, norms, and other cultural characteristics.

The current paradigm of Law Number 6 of 2016 concerning Villages allows village governments to manage local potential in their villages according to their local genius. The principal aim of fostering local potential within rural communities is to augment the overall well-being of the populace ultimately. The objective above can be accomplished by implementing guidance and awareness campaigns organized by the local community, alongside endeavours to foster a dynamic creative environment, specifically focusing on the sustainable utilization of natural resources. One crucial element of this development is to optimize the utilization of existing land resources and improve their efficiency, thereby promoting the production of high-quality goods that can contribute to the progress of rural communities (Ashari et al., 2012; Susanto, 2014).

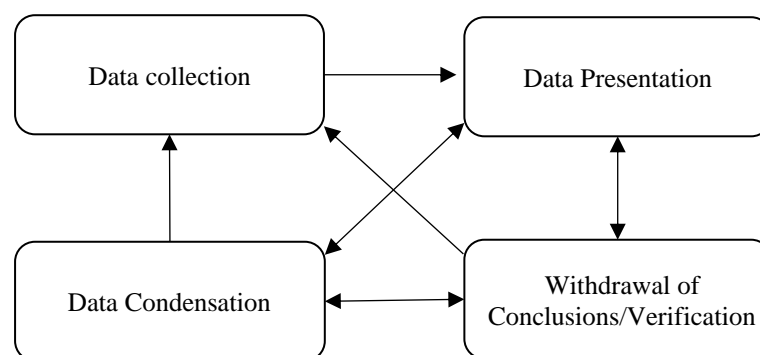
### **C. METHOD**

The approach used is descriptive qualitative. Qualitative research is defined as a research procedure that produces data and descriptions in the form of written or oral sentences from people and observable behaviour by describing the condition of the object under study (Zuriah, 2007). According to Creswell (2017) in the book *Research Design*, qualitative research is: "Qualitative research method is one type of method to describe, explore, and understand the meanings considered by some individuals or groups of people who come from the social environment or humanitarian problems".

The main data sources in qualitative research are primary data and secondary data. Preliminary data includes interviews and observations. Informants in this study were

determined purposively. Namely, the informants were selected and defined with the consideration that they had understood the Keren Program RT. The key informants are, Mayor of Blitar, Head of BAPPEDA (Regional Development Planning Agency), Head of Economic, Infrastructure, and Regional Development BAPPEDA (Regional Development Planning Agency), Head of the Government Section of the Regional Secretariat of the City of Blitar, and Head of Sub-section of Regional Government Secretariat of Blitar City, 21 pilot RTs and three sub-district heads in Blitar City Regency.

Secondary data in the form of photo and video documentation, official documents, papers relevant to this research and other documents for academic activities also support the data. The data were analyzed using several steps according to the theory of Miles et al. (2014), namely analyzing data in three stages: data compaction, data presentation and drawing conclusions and verification.



(Sources: Miles et al. (2014))

Figure 1. Components of the Interactive Data Analysis Model

## D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to Maryani & Roselin (2019), community empowerment is a development process where the community has the initiative to initiate a process of social activity to improve their situation and condition. Empowerment According to Maryani & Roselin (2019), empowerment is an effort that can be made so that objects become empowered or have power or strength. Meanwhile, according to Haris (2014), through empowerment activities, the community becomes the target of beneficiaries whose standard of living and welfare can be improved by providing them with counselling, training and other forms of exercise, all of which are intended to release them from powerlessness, alienation, and backwardness. Community empowerment can occur when the community itself also participates. Four principles are often used to make empowerment programs successful, namely, the principles of equality, participation, sustainability, and independence.

Deviating from the four principles above of empowerment, enhancing policies through empowerment programs will be linked to the execution and assessment of said programs. Furthermore, during the RT Keren talk show, Santoso, the Mayor of Blitar, disclosed seven fundamental aspects. First, participatory, involving residents from planning, implementation to supervision and maintenance; second, Transparent, the performance of activities is discussed in the institution and conveyed to the public; third, Accountable, the budget used can be accounted for by the provisions of the legislation; fourth, Orderly, the budget is managed in a timely and effective manner, supported by administrative evidence that can be accounted for; fifth, Obey the rules, and budget management must be by the provisions of the law; sixth, Advantageous, prioritized budget to meet community needs; seventh, The community must continuously feel the program's results for sustainability.

In addition, the details of the RT Keren program also prioritize physical development at 70% and non-physical at 30%, with details as follows:

**Table 2. Program Activities**

No.	RT Keren Program Activities	
	Physical 70%	Non-Physical 30%
1	Rehabilitation	Training
2	Renovation	Course
3	Painting and Maintenance	Socialization
4	Environment settings	Counselling
5	Local facilities and infrastructure at the RT/RW level	Similar activities are in the context of empowerment and are regulated in Perwali or Perpu

Source: Mayor of Blitar Presentation, 2021

### Community Empowerment through the RT Keren Program

The Vision-Mission and program of the Regional Head contain objectives, strategies, policy directions, regional development, regional finance, and regional apparatus programs in preparing the RPJMD accompanied by an indicative budget framework. In addition to handling the COVID-19 pandemic, policy implementation is used as a proposal for economic recovery in Blitar through the RT Keren program. Community participation in implementing the RT Keren program was also conveyed through the Musrenbang Forum (Development Planning Consultation).

Therefore, there is a need for an analysis of community satisfaction in implementing public policies. According to [Catur \(2020\)](#), this confirms that implementing government policies can be enjoyed and evaluated together in the future. Therefore, in this study, the researcher used the CATWOE acronym indicator analysis where this analysis is to clarify and reduce the potential for discussions related to policy optimization.

**Table 3. Analysis of Indicators Using the Acronym CATWOE**

Acronym	Information	Details
Customer	All components of society who are the beneficiaries or consequences of the system	Residents of Blitar
Actor	The parties involved in the formulation and idea implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pair of Candidates for Regional Head for Mayor and Deputy Mayor</li> <li>- The winning team for regional head candidates consists of various elements both community leaders, youth, and religious leaders</li> <li>- Individual actors, observers, and experts who influence the mindset of formulating the Vision and Mission of regional head candidates</li> </ul>
Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The activity or process of converting inputs into outputs in the form of ideas in the concept of community empowerment ideas</li> <li>- Conversion from input to output</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How policy ideas are formulated</li> <li>- To what extent are customers and actors involved in each stage of the policy?</li> <li>- How to see conditions in the field and become a program of ideas</li> </ul>

World View	Perceptions and views about ideas or perspectives that make transformation meaningful	Perceptions of actors and customers on the idea of empowering local communities in the form of the Vision and Mission of the Regional Head's policy
Owner	Those who are in full control of planning responsible ideas that can stop the transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Candidate for Regional Head who has a Vision and Mission</li> <li>- Regional head candidate winning team</li> </ul>
Environment	Environment as parameter	An idea that can accommodate various problems in society

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2022

Analysis with the Acronym CATWO focuses on the idea that Customers (C) are all components that benefit from the program, namely the community. Then Actor (A) is the element that carries out the transformation, in this case, the regional head and the relevant government, then Transformation (T), which means the idea or formulation of the vision and mission of the regional leader. Then World View, a broad or forward view of the vision and mission, Owner (O) are the elements. That affects the sustainability of the system being built.

Blitar The Keren program includes RT Keren, which helps all RTs in Blitar City, worth 50-100 million per year. With the existence of Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2020 concerning the 2021 APBD and changed to Blitar Mayor Regulation Number 46 of 2021 concerning Empowerment of Village Communities through the Cool Blitar Program. The achievement of the Keren Blitar Program is Rp. 32,550,000,000.00, Comparison of the budget is almost three times the previous budget. It is expected to help realize the work program formulated for each RT.

The village community empowerment program through the RT Keren program, regulated in Blitar Mayor Regulation Number 46 of 2021, provides contributions and benefits in increasing community empowerment and welfare. The role of community empowerment in economic development is manifested through the encapsulation of community values, which constructs a novel paradigm. This development is distinguished by an approach that emphasizes participation and collaboration.

RT is entrusted with the jurisdiction to oversee and administer matters about allocating and utilizing funds derived from the Regional Budget (APBD). Implementing participatory activities within the RT Keren program allows for direct management and execution by the participating community, thereby enhancing their relevance. This initiative's primary objective is to mitigate the existing regional disparities in development effectively.

The advancements above have resulted in notable advances in each respective field, facilitating the seamless execution of urban development initiatives. Consequently, this simplifies the progressive resolution of issues within the given domain.

From observation and interview data about community empowerment programs in RT Keren Blitar City, some data can be conveyed showing the process of community empowerment in optimizing government policies through sustainable development goals. The following are various community empowerment programs from the implementation of government policies as described above, including:

Table 4. Forms of Community Empowerment Programs in the Context of RT Keren

No	Programs (Activities)	Type of Activity
1	Waste Recycling Training (RT 02 RW 1 Karang Sari )	Sustainable
2	Pastries Making Training (Rt 02 RW 04 Sentul)	Sustainable
3	Batik Training (RT 03 RW 10 Sanan wet )	Sustainable
4	Thematic Development (Physical)	Plan All RT
5	Thematic Paving Construction (RT 02 RW 5)	Sustainable
6	Recycling paper into bags (RT 1 RW 2)	Sustainable
7	RT Keren Physical Program in all Districts	Sustainable
8	Physical program in the form of painting and repairing thematic paving at RT 02 Bendogerit	Sustainable
9	Physical program is also implemented in RT 01 Bendogerit (Thematic Paping)	Sustainable
10	Physical program in the form of Drainage Development and Non-Physical Activities in the form of Loundy Training in Bendogerit	Sustainable
11	Physical Program for Water Improvement at RT 03 RW 10 Bendogerit	Sustainable

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2022

The empowerment program above is the first step to realizing other sustainable programs. The policy implementation plan and process through the RT Keren program is a form of massive community empowerment. The variety of training and physical development has become an intense communication activity between the government and the community. Besides that, people's aspirations are more easily absorbed. Here are some documentations of community empowerment through the RT Keren program from physical and non-physical development, including:



Bendogerit (RT. 02, RW. 05)

Physical Activities: Alley Road Paving

Non-Physical Activities: Waste Bank Training



Gedog (RT. 02, RW. 05)

Physical Activity: Gate Construction

Non-Physical Activities: Hadrah Exercise



Karangtengah (RT. 01, RW. 09)

Physical Activities: Repair of drains

Non-Physical Activities: Cake-making training

Klampok (RT. 01, RW. 01)

Physical Activity: Drainage Construction

Non-Physical Activities: Laundry Training

(Source: Photo by Ahmad, 2022)

Picture 1. Example of Community Empowerment through the RT Keren Program

From the Picture 1, it can be seen that the community empowerment program through the implementation of the RT Keren policy has two processes, namely empowerment in physical development and non-physical development which includes training, workshops, and human resource development. This program activity is an effort to realize and optimize the implementation of the RT Keren program to improve community empowerment at the RT level in Blitar City by the promises of the Blitar Mayor's priority program and the SDGs.

### The Realization of Sustainable Development or SDGs through the RT Keren Program

The Blitar Keren Program represents the government's endeavour to improve the community's well-being. Community empowerment aims to be customized according to the unique circumstances, attributes, and exceptional capabilities of the particular locality.

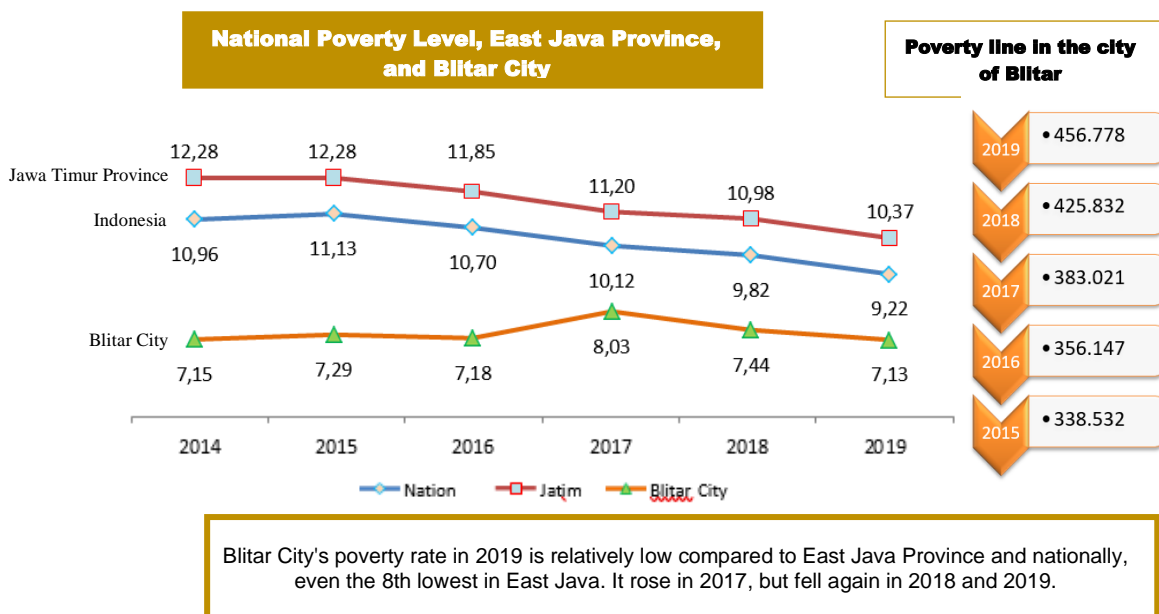
Blitar Keren Program also aims to explore and empower the potential of the community in RT/RW in: (1) Implementation of participatory development; (2) Facilitating the fulfilment of community needs; (3) Promoting the development of environmental infrastructure; (4) Encouraging community participation and empowerment in development; and (5) Improving the welfare of the community through social and creative economic activities.

Community empowerment programs must realize regional development as part of national development based on the principle of regional autonomy. This initiative aims to optimize municipal administrations' operational productivity and overall performance. Along with this aim are national initiatives called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Community empowerment plays a crucial role in the implementation of sustainable development programs. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) encompass a range of initiatives to promote

economic growth and serve as a strategic response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic's economic recovery efforts.

The implementation of the SDGs is integrated with the development priorities of the Blitar City RPJMD related to poverty alleviation, clean water supply, sanitation, employment, and inclusive economic growth (RPJMD, Blitar City, 2020).

With the SDGs, local governments can see how the graph of economic growth or the poverty rate is as a reference for development in the following year. As happened in 2017, the poverty data for Blitar City was 8.03%, while in 2019, it decreased to 7.19%. To reduce the poverty rate again and build an economy that prospers the community, the new Blitar City Government has implemented the RT Keren program as a derivative of the vision of the city of Blitar, namely Blitar Cool. It is imperative to prioritize robust optimization and synergy using community empowerment initiatives.



(Source: Strategic Data on Social Welfare of Blitar City, 2021)

Figure 2. Poverty Level of Blitar City

Based on the poverty data of Blitar City, with this data, it will be easier for the government to intervene in community empowerment programs in each region, primarily through analysis at the RT level. Hence, the RT Keren program, an essential component of the sustainable development process, is pivotal in facilitating poverty alleviation endeavours within the City of Blitar annually. Based on the researcher's analysis, it has been determined that distinct Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) exist in unity with facilitating local community empowerment within Blitar City. Based on the researcher's analysis, it has been determined that these differences with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are in one unit by facilitating the empowerment of local communities in Blitar City, namely goal 1, end poverty in all its forms everywhere; goal 2, eliminate hunger, achieve food security and good nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture; and goal 3, Ensuring healthy lives and promoting the well-being of people of all ages.

Blitar Keren program was prepared with multi-stakeholders so that the sense of belonging to the program is getting stronger, and it is hoped that its implementation will not leave anyone behind. Community empowerment is the key to the program's success in carrying out various activities to achieve the goals that have been set. It can be an added value and valuable if appropriate and reliable human resources empower these resources. So the purpose of

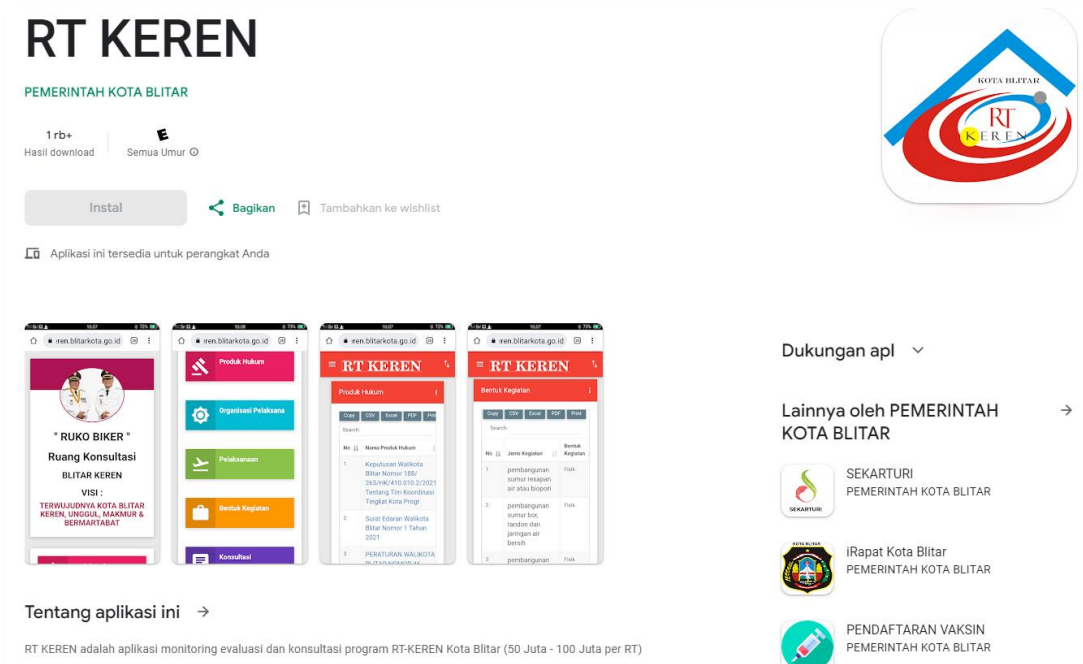
community empowerment is also the realization of human resources who have the ability and can be responsible for implementing programs to achieve the goals of community empowerment.

In line with that, according to [Setianingsih et al. \(2015\)](#), community satisfaction with the development process can be measured through a more transparent acceptance and evaluation process, where the community feels involved in every planning and implementation of the program. In addition, [Haryono \(2018\)](#) in his research states that government policy planning needs to accept the aspirations and participation of rural communities, arguing that good or bad regional development will impact the community.

The incorporation of a variety of community empowerment programs holds considerable importance in the pursuit of addressing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These programs encompass both tangible and intangible initiatives. Community groups are structured to facilitate a learning process that addresses challenges associated with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including poverty eradication, food security, and promoting a healthy and prosperous life. This approach prioritizes potential, independence, and creativity and focuses on community development.

The success of this empowerment program is assessed through monitoring and evaluation of the program, which is submitted directly to the mayor. The results of this program's work were directly appreciated in the launch of RT Keren in 3 sub-districts in the Blitar City Government area as a manifestation of the mayor's campaign promise formulated through technocratic ideas and became a priority program for the RPJMD. The continuation of the RT Keren program will also be implemented in 630 RTs throughout Blitar City.

Community empowerment holds considerable significance for its intended audience, specifically in enhancing the well-being of underprivileged families and achieving socio-economic autonomy at both individual and societal scales. The results above are attained through the implementation of non-physical training provided within the context of the RT Keren program.



(Source: Playstore, 2022)

Figure 3. RT Keren Apps on Google Play Store

The pilot RTs that have been put into operation result in immediate advantages, thus making a valuable contribution to the long-term viability of the program initiated by the mayor. Consequently, funding has been a notable augmentation of 75 million per RT. Of course, applying the principle of community empowerment through community groups and competent companions or facilitators needs to be prepared with a rigorous recruitment process assisted by academics and other experts. So that the dynamics that arise in community groups and the quality of companions can determine the achievement of community empowerment. This program is also supported by using technology to develop the RT Keren application.

This application was created to monitor the evaluation and consultation of the RT Keren "BIKER RUKO" program to answer all problems regarding the planning, implementation, and evaluation of physical and non-physical activities. The primary objective of the community empowerment program is to achieve a more extensive influence by not only tackling poverty and hunger and promoting a healthy and prosperous society, as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but also by encompassing fundamental necessities and mitigating the exacerbation of inequality within each region and Blitar City.

Human resource development must be carried out on a minor basis and then to a major as an effort to improve from the lowest level first. HR development will be more effective if carried out from the RT level, then RW, and expanded into a village. Several regions have done this and can improve the quality of life of their communities through the development of village potential. As happened in the tourist village of Pujon, Malang Regency, which was developed by utilizing its natural potential, coordinated from the RT level, then RW and on a broad scale, namely the village.

Suppose it is associated with the City of Blitar. In that case, the development of the Pujon tourist village can be imitated, especially since the City of Blitar has local potential that can be developed to improve the welfare of its citizens. Some local possibilities that can be created include the agricultural sector, regional tourism, and plantations. Facilitating this progression at the grassroots level is imperative, guaranteeing that the community is provided with essential aid and backing.

Mutual provisions must carry out the development program without harming any party, especially the community. [Medeiros \(2019\)](#) stated in his research that a policy evaluation methodology in development must be carried out to assess the impact of policy implementation. [Correia \(2019\)](#) said that the strategic planning process is the main thing that must be considered and adjusted to the dimensions, timing, and threats that can thwart development policies.

The research conducted by [Wibisono \(2021\)](#) highlights the interconnectedness of development in various domains, emphasizing the significance of selecting a suitable development model to facilitate efficient planning. This resource provides significant value for the stakeholders engaged in the process.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Based on the description of the qualitative data above, it can be concluded that the vision handed down from the Blitar City Government or the leadership of the Blitar Mayor for 2020-2024 is the RT Keren Program. This policy aligns with sustainable development goals, or SDGs, through strengthening ideas and their implementation. Through the RT Keren Program, the community empowerment program aims to synergize the city government with the community as program customers. In addition, the development and community empowerment program in Blitar City through the RT Keren program cannot be separated from the law. The RT Keren program is also analyzed through indicators that show the transformative role of regional leadership in developing the region, in this case, the City of Blitar.

In terms of optimization, this program still requires improvements in its implementation, including mentoring and supervision. This program is still new, so the impact of its performance cannot be seen yet. However, this program is quite good if it is called one of the solutions for community development, especially from a small scope, namely RT, as an effort to develop and develop the community's economy.

In implementing the RT Keren program, it is necessary to get more attention from stakeholders in its progress. Competency development in community groups (POKMAS) must begin with community empowerment, namely through the development of human resources. And the community's sustainable development process needs to be understood.

The practical implementation of community empowerment optimization is crucial for achieving empowerment transformation in the development of Blitar City. This process entails enhancing economic growth and promoting innovation through a range of strategies, including model training, workshops, and infrastructure development, such as the construction of roads. The RT Keren program in Blitar City functions as an initiative that seeks to empower the community by unleashing their economic potential and fostering creativity.

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