

## Utilization of Social Capital in Enhancing the Village Development Index

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### ABSTRACT

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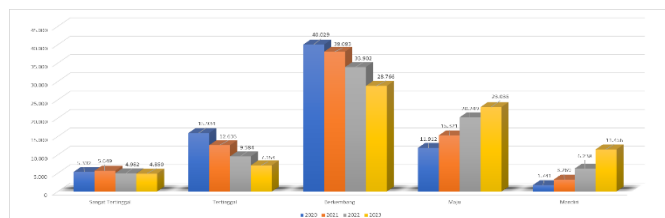
*Membangun, trust, village development.*

The Village Development Index (Indeks Desa Membangun) is an instrument used to measure village progress and independence, with five status categories: very underdeveloped (*sangat tertinggal*), underdeveloped (*tertinggal*), developing (*berkembang*), advanced (*maju*), and independent (*mandiri*). This study examines the utilization of social capital to improve the Indeks Desa Membangun in Medan Krio Village, Sunggal Subdistrict, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province. Social capital, encompassing trust, norms, and networks, is considered a crucial asset in supporting village development. Using a qualitative approach, this study analyzes the contribution of social interactions and community participation to the improvement of the Indeks Desa Membangun. The findings indicate that social capital in Medan Krio Village significantly enhances community participation in development programs and strengthens social bonds among residents. Moreover, social capital fosters a conducive and stable village environment, essential for successful village development. The study concludes by emphasizing the importance of strengthening social capital as an effective village development strategy.

### INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, with a land area of 1,904,569 km<sup>2</sup>, encompasses approximately 17,500 islands and hosts 75,265 villages spread across 38 provinces. To monitor the progress of village self-sufficiency, the government introduced a stimulative instrument for village development through the Village Development Index (Minister of Village Regulation No. 2 of 2015 on the Village Development Index). The Village Development Index is measured annually, providing a means to assess and monitor the progress and challenges faced by villages in their development journey, ensuring appropriate and effective interventions.

The results of the Village Development Index measurements are issued annually through a Decree of the Minister of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration. In 2023, the Ministry issued the Decree of the Minister of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration No. 174 of 2023 on the Status of Village Progress and Independence for the Year 2023. It was found that in 2023, there were 4,850 very underdeveloped villages, 7,154 underdeveloped villages, 28,766 developing villages, 23,035 advanced villages, and 11,456 independent villages.



**Figure 1 . Overview of the Village Status 2020-2023**

Based on the above data, it is evident that over the past four years, the status of advanced and independent villages has continuously

increased. The Village Development Index of North Sumatra Province remains the same as the previous year with a Developing status, ranking 29th nationally. However, the number of very underdeveloped villages in North Sumatra has decreased by 64 villages, and the number of underdeveloped villages has decreased by 249 villages. This correlates with the increase in the number of developing villages by 85 villages, advanced villages by 187 villages, and independent villages by 41 villages. This improvement in the Village Development Index is spread across 27 regencies in North Sumatra.

In 2023, Deli Serdang Regency has 17 independent villages. Among these 17 independent villages, 5 are located in Sunggal Subdistrict.

**Table 1.** Village Status in Sunggal Subdistrict

Village Name	Status in 2022	Status in 2023
Helvetia	Advanced	Advanced
Lalang	Advanced	Independen
Medan Krio	Advanced	Independen
Mulio Rejo	Independen	Independen
Payageli	Advanced	Advanced
Puji Mulyo	Developing	Advanced
Purwodadi	Maju	Advanced
Sei Beraskata	Developing	Developing
Telaga Sari	Advanced	Advanced
Sei Mencirim	Independen	Independen
Sei Semayang	Independen	Independen
Serbajadi	Developing	Developing
Sukamaju	Developing	Advanced
Sumber Melati	Advanced	Advanced
Sunggal Kanan	Developing	Advanced
Tanjung Gusta	Developing	Advanced

Tanjung Selamat	Advanced	Advanced
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Sunggal Subdistrict consists of 17 villages. In 2022, Sunggal Subdistrict had 6 developing villages, 8 advanced villages, and 3 independent villages. In 2023, the number of independent villages in Sunggal Subdistrict increased to 5, with the addition of two new independent villages: Medan Krio and Lalang.

The improvement in village status, whether independent, advanced, or developing, requires contributions from both community elements and village government. Each indicator in the Village Development Index (IDM) assessment—social resilience, economic resilience, and environmental resilience—includes components targeting the involvement of the community and village government. The willingness of the community to engage in activities that enhance the IDM value can be referred to as the village community's Social Capital. Generally, social capital has three parameters: trust, norms, and networks, which can increase community efficiency by facilitating structured actions (Putnam, 1993).

Based on this, the researcher suspects that the increase in the Village Development Index (IDM) of Medan Krio Village is supported by the utilization of social capital in Medan Krio Village, Sunggal Subdistrict, Deli Serdang Regency. This has enabled it to achieve Independent Village status in the Village Development Index calculation.

## METHOD

This research is a qualitative study (Hendryadi, 2019). Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with informants, including the Village Head, Local Village Facilitator, Village Officials, Members of the Village Supervisory Board, and Community Leaders of Medan Krio Village. The researcher chose to use qualitative research to provide an in-depth description of the phenomena in the field, in accordance with the research needs.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 The Potential of Social Capital in Increasing the Village Development Index in Medan Krio Village

#### 3.1.1 Trust

This study found that trust in Medan Krio Village has significant implications for relationships between individuals and groups within the community. Mutual trust creates strong bonds, encourages collaboration, and increases participation in social life. The community also continues to listen to and respect community leaders in decision-making processes related to public welfare. This is affirmed by a member of the Village Consultative Body (BPD) of Medan Krio Village, who stated that the community often seeks advice from community leaders on various matters, including decisions related to village development.

Trust in the Village Head and community leaders results in cooperative behavior and resident participation in initiatives from the village government, such as regulations for environmental protection, maintaining security, and development procedures in the village. The behavior stemming from this trust encourages the creation of a conducive village environment and minimizes conflicts in the village, even though the community is made up of various ethnicities and cultures.

Data from the Village Development Index questionnaire shows that no significant conflicts occur in Medan Krio

Village, as every issue is always resolved amicably by involving the village government and community leaders..

The conducive situation then encourages the growth of various economic and educational activities in the village. Medan Krio Village has 23 schools, consisting of kindergarten, elementary, junior high, and high schools. These schools in Medan Krio Village serve as learning destinations for students from both Medan Krio and surrounding villages. It is also known that there are 480 micro and small industries that continue to grow in Medan Krio Village. This is a manifestation of utilizing trust to create peaceful and stable conditions in the village. In the Village Development Index (IDM), this situation is reflected in the Social Resilience Index, specifically in the social capital dimension, which includes (a) social solidarity, (b) tolerance, (c) residents' sense of security, and (d) social welfare. Nevertheless, other dimensions are also influenced by elements of trust, such as orderliness in following village regulations, which creates a clean environment. This is reflected in the Environmental Resilience Index.

#### 3.1.2 Norms

The values that form a shared agreement in the social life of Medan Krio Village are general concepts about ideals, desires, or things considered good. These values include family life, mutual assistance, and harmony. Norms, which are a more detailed elaboration of values, shape patterns of life that contain commands, recommendations, and prohibitions. These norms are expressed in both informal and non-formal regulatory frameworks.

The values upheld by the people of Medan Krio include harmony, mutual assistance, and family spirit. These values underpin community behavior, as seen in their adherence to village government regulations and concern for their surroundings. For example, compliance with rules on night patrols and waste disposal reflects the villagers' commitment to values and norms that promote a comfortable and orderly environment in the village.

The village government also establishes regulations that the community adheres to, such as maintaining order by restructuring the rules for selling in the culinary center at Medan Krio Village Square under the management of BUMDes Bintang Jaya. This policy aims to create a more structured and organized economic diversity.

Additionally, a resident established a *rumah tahfiz* (Quran memorization school), where children can stay and strengthen their religious education. The purpose of founding this *rumah tahfiz* is to enhance children's religious education and keep them away from negative social influences. The founder stated that his motivation for establishing the *rumah tahfiz* stemmed from his concern for neighborhood children who were unsupervised by their parents at night. This situation raised worries that these children might become increasingly difficult to monitor and fall into unfavorable social circles. The values upheld in this context are family spirit and mutual assistance within the community.

Compliance with village regulations and community initiatives in establishing religious educational institutions contribute to maintaining harmony in the village and expanding children's access to knowledge. This is reflected in the Village Development Index, particularly in the social and economic resilience indicators, covering aspects such as

education, social capital, trade centers, and economic institutions.

### 3.1.3 Network

Networks, as connections between individuals and groups, facilitate the exchange of information, resources, and support within the community. In Medan Krio Village, these networks involve various stakeholders who contribute to enhancing community capacity.

The entities connected with Medan Krio Village include universities conducting community service programs. These activities encompass awareness campaigns on health, domestic violence, legal assistance, and other initiatives. Such networks aim to improve the capacity and knowledge of the village community.

Additionally, the government is also involved in these networks, including vocational training centers, district sanitation officers, and MSME training centers. Collaboration with the government supports various aspects of community life, such as skills training, environmental cleanliness, and the development of micro, small, and medium enterprises.

The networks between individuals and groups in Medan Krio Village play a crucial role in supporting the village's growth and development. Cooperation with external parties, including universities and government institutions, helps enhance community capacity and create a more prosperous and sustainable environment.

In the context of the Village Development Index assessment, networks are not specifically measured by the quantity of collaborations. However, they correlate with the presence of economic institutions, educational facilities, and other sectors that support community well-being. A strong network reinforces the village's social and economic structure, ultimately improving the overall quality of life for its residents.

## 3.2 Aspects Influencing Social Capital in Medan Krio Village

Social capital encompasses networks, trust, and norms within a community that support cooperation. In this context, several factors influence social capital, such as population density, access to education, government structure, and infrastructure, as these factors determine the extent to which the community can connect, collaborate, and build trust to drive positive social change.

First, the government structure in Medan Krio Village, led by an innovative and open-minded leader, brings a new perspective to decision-making, making it more responsive to community needs. The head of Medan Krio Village has a long-term vision to address the challenges arising from the development of Medan and Binjai, allowing the village to play a bridging role between the two cities. The challenges faced include economic integration, infrastructure improvement, and human resource development. To address these, the village head needs to design strategies that involve participatory planning, basic infrastructure development, skill enhancement through training, and partnerships with the private sector to create job opportunities and investment. Through this approach, the village head strives to ensure that the people of Medan Krio are not just spectators of the surrounding development but are also participants who benefit from it.

The long-term thinking of the village head can strengthen social capital by involving the community in village planning, which enhances trust and cooperation among residents. Infrastructure development and skill improvement strengthen social networks and solidarity norms, while partnerships with the private sector create economic opportunities that bind the community through enhanced welfare. Therefore, this strategy not only addresses development challenges but also strengthens the village's social capital.

Second, population density in the village. The population density in Medan Krio Village, which reaches 16,389 people, significantly impacts the strengthening of social capital in the village. The more intense social interactions among residents, due to the large population, encourage the formation of strong and solid social networks. This fosters the emergence of solidarity norms and strengthens trust and cooperation among residents. Additionally, population density can stimulate the village economy by increasing purchasing power, creating greater demand for goods and services, and encouraging local business growth. Through more frequent interactions, villagers can get to know each other better, build stronger social bonds, and reinforce a sense of solidarity within the community.

However, population density also brings challenges, such as the potential for conflicts between residents or competition for limited resources. Nevertheless, these challenges can serve as a catalyst for the community to collaborate and work together to solve existing problems. This more complex social dynamic increases the potential for broader and stronger social networks. By relying on each other, the residents of Medan Krio Village can strengthen their social capital, which in turn supports collective progress toward greater well-being and development.

Third, access to education in the village. The available access to education in Medan Krio Village plays a vital role in improving the quality of life for residents. The village has 23 schools, ranging from kindergarten to high school, which not only meet local educational needs but also attract students from other villages. The presence of these schools enhances social interaction, enriches social networks, and makes schools a hub for community activities. Through extracurricular activities, mutual cooperation, holiday celebrations, and inter-school competitions, relationships between residents grow closer, building trust, cooperation, and stronger solidarity norms.

Education in Medan Krio Village provides opportunities for almost all segments of the population to gain better knowledge and skills. In addition to teaching technical skills, education also shapes character by instilling essential values such as collaboration, tolerance, and respect for differences. Increasing levels of education encourage the community to become more aware of the importance of participation in social and governmental life, strengthening social capital and improving overall quality of life. With quality education, the community is also better prepared to face challenges and actively contribute to building a more harmonious community.

Fourth, good infrastructure in Medan Krio Village significantly supports the smooth flow of social interactions and community activities. With adequate public facilities such as well-maintained roads, markets, and community spaces, residents can easily gather and participate in various social and economic activities. Good infrastructure also facilitates easier access to essential services, such as healthcare and education,



which improve residents' quality of life. This improved accessibility enhances mobility, creating opportunities for residents to interact and expand their social networks. As infrastructure improves, participation in economic activities also increases, which ultimately strengthens existing social networks and enhances the village's overall social capital.

### 3.3 The Utilization of Social Capital in Community Empowerment in Medan Krio Village

In community empowerment efforts, Medan Krio Village can leverage social capital to strengthen local institutions, enhance trust and cooperation, utilize social networks, improve access to resources, form shared norms and values, and make use of information and communication technology.

First, strengthening local institutions is a crucial step in community empowerment. By forming and developing community groups such as farmer groups, women's groups, MSME groups, and youth organizations, village residents have platforms to share information and experiences. These groups can serve as places to enhance skills through training relevant to the village's needs, such as marketing techniques or handicrafts. With the strengthening of these institutions, the capacity and skills of residents will improve, ultimately contributing to better economic and social development in the village.

Second, increasing trust and cooperation among residents is a crucial step in strengthening social capital. One way to achieve this is by ensuring transparency and accountability in the management of village projects or programs. When residents feel that the village government and fellow villagers can be trusted, they are more likely to actively participate in social activities and development. This can be facilitated through community forums or village meetings, which provide space for residents to contribute to planning, implementation, and evaluation of village programs. With greater trust, cooperation among residents will strengthen, accelerating the achievement of common goals. This trust and cooperation can then extend to external parties beyond the village.

Third, utilizing social networks plays an important role in community empowerment. Existing social networks, whether through informal groups such as community events or regular meetings in the village, can strengthen relationships among residents and expand opportunities for sharing information. Additionally, building partnerships with neighboring villages opens up opportunities for exchanging experiences and resources more widely. For example, these villages could collaborate in marketing agricultural products or handicrafts, which would expand markets and increase the income of village residents. By strengthening existing social networks, solidarity among residents will grow, supporting collective development.

Fourth, improving access to resources is a key step in maximizing the village's economic potential. One effective way is by establishing village financial institutions that provide capital for small and medium enterprises. These institutions can also serve as storage and marketing hubs for agricultural products or crafts from village residents, which can increase their income. Furthermore, capacity-building is necessary for village residents to manage these resources effectively, including skills in financial management, marketing, and business management, so that the sustainability and economic impact of these efforts can be maximized.

Fifth, the formation of strong shared norms and values will strengthen solidarity and cooperation within the village community. One way to achieve this is by reinforcing the culture of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), which is a tradition in many villages, to solve various community problems together. For example, in village infrastructure development or environmental cleanliness activities, the *gotong royong* value can accelerate problem-solving and improve efficiency. Additionally, social and cultural activities such as village festivals, communal work, or other community events can strengthen bonds between residents, build a sense of togetherness, and improve overall quality of life.

Sixth, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) is an effective way to accelerate community empowerment in the village. Providing digital literacy training for residents will enable them to utilize technology, such as marketing products online, which can improve their economic well-being. Furthermore, using social media or other communication platforms can facilitate the dissemination of information and coordination of community activities. This will improve communication efficiency among residents and strengthen social networks, creating new opportunities for village development through the use of technology.

### CONCLUSIONS

The potential of social capital in Medan Krio Village that contributes to the improvement of the Village Development Index (IDM) status includes aspects of trust, norms, and networks. These aspects have proven to play a significant role in strengthening social capital in the village.

The analysis shows that several key elements, such as governance structure, population density, access to education, and infrastructure, significantly contribute to strengthening social capital in Medan Krio Village. A good governance structure creates a conducive environment for positive social interactions. Appropriate population density facilitates closer community involvement. Good access to education increases residents' awareness and skills, while adequate infrastructure supports mobility and more effective communication.

In the context of community empowerment in Medan Krio, the potential of social capital can be utilized for various purposes, including strengthening local institutions, increasing trust and cooperation, utilizing social networks, improving access to resources, forming shared values and norms, and using information and communication technology. Strengthening local institutions aims to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of local institutions in carrying out their functions and responsibilities. Increasing trust and cooperation is an important step in building and maintaining mutual trust among village residents. Utilizing social networks allows for expanding access to information and resources.

Improving access to resources facilitates better access to economic, educational, and healthcare resources. The formation of shared values and norms aims to develop and strengthen values that support solidarity and social cohesion. The use of information and communication technology is crucial for enhancing connectivity and efficiency in various social and economic activities.

These findings indicate that social capital in Medan Krio Village is not only important for improving IDM status, but also acts as a key driver in various community empowerment and village development efforts. This potential of social capital must be continuously developed and optimally utilized to achieve sustainable village development.

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