

Chapter 8

Communication Development and Youth Empowerment in Renewable Energy

Susri Adeni, Machyudin Agung Harahap, Titien Yusnita

A. Introduction

Renewable energy has basically been echoed for a long time. How can people maximize and save energy use so that energy supplies are still fulfilled and look for other new energy alternatives? Based on a survey conducted by Coaction Indonesia of 96,651 netizens showing that there was a high level of public concern for renewable energy, it was noted that 23.8% of respondents chose the sun as a renewable energy source and 22.4% chose bioenergy (Koaksi Indonesia, 2019). Of the netizens who took part in the survey, a total of 67.6% of survey respondents were young respondents between 17 and 30 years old. This figure is consistent with the age category of social media users in Indonesia, which is dominated by young people. Furthermore,

S. Adeni, M. A. Harahap, T. Yusnita
Universitas Bengkulu, e-mail: susriadeni@gmail.com

© 2023 Editors & Authors

Adeni, S., Harahap, M. A., Yusnita, T. (2023). Communication development and youth empowerment in renewable energy. In S. Ariyanto & S. I. Heriyanti (Eds.), *Renewable energy: Policy and strategy* (171–182). BRIN Publishing. DOI: 10.55981/brin.900.c788 E-ISBN: 978-623-8372-25-6

according to respondents, Indonesia has challenges in developing this renewable energy, namely that many people still do not understand the importance of renewable energy. In line with the results of research conducted by Saputra et al. (2021) which shows that, out of 346 youth respondents in West Sumatra, many young people do not fully understand renewable energy and the potential that exists in the West Sumatra area.

This is also not followed by empowering what youth should be able to do in supporting policies and development, as well as the development of renewable energy. Meanwhile, Indonesia has great potential to develop renewable energy. In 2025, Indonesia is expected to be able to develop alternative energy such as gas, coal, solar power, wind power, hydropower, geothermal, and nuclear (Rijanto & Armawi, 2011).

B. Communication Development and Youth Empowerment

Development should be carried out based on the needs of the community and what are shared aspirations with the goal of common welfare. According to Todaro (in Harjanto, 2011), development is defined as a multidimensional process which includes changes in social structure, changes in people's attitudes to life, and changes in national institutions. The development of a country is also directed at three main things: increasing the (1) availability and (2) distribution of basic needs for the community, and (3) increasing the ability of the community to access both economic and social activities in their lives.

According to Ginanjar Kartasasmita (1994, in Harjanto, 2011), development is a process of change towards a better direction through planned efforts. Meanwhile, Siagian (in Harjanto, 2011) defines development as "an effort or series of growth and change efforts that are planned and carried out consciously by a nation, state and government, towards modernity in the framework of nation building (nation building)".

With some of the definitions of development previously mentioned, it can be concluded that development is carried out consciously and planned with the aim of realizing people's welfare. The role of development communication has been widely discussed by experts. Rogers and Shoemaker (1981) states that, in simple terms, development is a useful change towards a social and economic system that is decided as the will of a nation. In another part, Rogers and Shoemaker stated that communication is the basis of social change. From the analysis of these experts, it can be concluded that development basically involves at least three components, namely (1) development communicators, who can be government officials or the community; (2) development messages that contain ideas or development programs; and (3) recipient of development, namely the wider community, both rural and urban residents who are the target of development, in this case, especially youth.

In development communication, what is prioritized is the activity of educating and motivating the community. The aim is to instill ideas, mental attitudes, and teach the skills needed by society (Nasution, 2009). To convey the message of development, development communication must consider important things that are useful for the community in accordance with development goals. The gap in the effects of communication can be minimized if the development communication strategy includes the following principles (Rogers & Adhikarya, in Nasution, 2009): (1) the use of messages specifically designed for specific audiences; (2) the "ceiling effect" approached by communicating messages to groups that are not targeted or of little benefit; (3) the use of a "narrow casting" approach or localizing the delivery of messages for the benefit of the public; (4) utilization of traditional channels; (5) introduction of opinion leaders in disadvantaged communities; (6) activation of the participation of change agents from the community itself; and (7) developing ways or mechanisms for audience participation.

In addition, in order for development communication to work in the community, it is appropriate that the strategies implemented are in

accordance with the needs of the community. One strategy that can be used is the participation strategy, in which the community is invited to play an active role in the communication and information function. Community-based development is needed so that the participation strategy can work as expected. Community-based development allows communication to run well where this concept emphasizes the social learning process in which there is collaborative interaction between the bureaucracy and the community, starting from the planning process to evaluation based on mutual learning (Theresia et al., 2014).

This is what allows youth to play an active role in development and become part of the agent of change, especially in the case of renewable energy. According to the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 40 of 2009 concerning Youth (UU No. 40, 2009), what is meant by youth are Indonesian citizens who are entering an important period of growth and development aged 16 to 30 years. Collaboration between stakeholders and youth can facilitate development goals, especially regarding this renewable energy issue. The participation strategy and development principles form the basis of this research to formulate a development communication concept that aims at the role of youth in renewable energy.

Youth, in this case, needs to be empowered to have a significant role in understanding renewable energy. This is because youth empowerment is an activity to awaken the potential and active role of youth, so the role of youth is very important, considering that youth are always associated with change agents and become agents of change themselves. However, unfortunately, youth empowerment has not been widely discussed and researched in terms of development communication for renewable energy. What needs to be done to realize the role and empowerment of youth in renewable energy is to create an atmosphere or climate that allows the potential of the community (youth) to develop, strengthen the potential or power possessed by the community (youth), and empower the potential of the community (youth) (Theresia, et al., 2014). Empowerment must

place the strength of the community, in this case, youth, as the main capital to increase community independence.

The participation of the community and youth is needed to realize participation in understanding renewable energy. Youth as agents of change should be the focus of development communication for the empowerment of renewable energy. In reality, there is not much research on youth empowerment in terms of renewable energy. For this reason, relevant research is needed on this issue so that youth begin to build awareness of the importance of renewable energy.

The lack of research on youth empowerment concerning development communication for renewable energy makes this research significant. So far, existing articles are only about renewable energy, without any further research on youth empowerment. So, this research needs to explore and discover further regarding development communication to empower youth in understanding renewable energy.

This research was carried out by means of a survey by distributing Google form to college students and students in Bogor especially in three villages in Pamijahan subdistrict, namely Pamijahan, Pasarean, and Cibitung Wetan. The selection of the three villages was due to their geographical location that is closer to the main road and the availability of internet access. The people there also use smartphones and are connected to the internet network. The number of respondents who returned Google form was 72 respondents, of which 35 were female respondents and the remaining 37 were male respondents. Meanwhile, the age of respondents ranged from 20–24 years with a bachelor's degree (S-1). All respondents have accounts on social media, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter and the respondents are active in using social media.

The data obtained from the respondents were analyzed quantitatively descriptive and qualitatively descriptive. For quantitative data, researchers only grouped data on age, gender, type of social media used and understanding of renewable energy. Meanwhile, for qualitative data, researchers asked further questions about renewable energy and not all respondents used the data. Researchers chose

several representative people to answer research questions regarding the role of youth and renewable energy.

C. Youth Understanding of Renewable Energy

Renewable energy sources are a hot issue nowadays due to the depletion of existing resources. Researchers want to know the understanding of youth about renewable energy. Of the 72 respondents who answered the survey distributed by researchers, it appears that only 11 respondents understood renewable energy, 56 respondents had heard of renewable energy, and there were only 5 respondents who did not know about renewable energy.

Some of the youth's understanding of renewable energy is that it is a source of energy available by nature and can be utilized continuously. They understand that renewable energy comes from "sustainable natural processes", such as solar power, wind power, water currents, biological processes, and geothermal. They also understand that renewable energy is energy used continuously, such as wind, water, and sun.

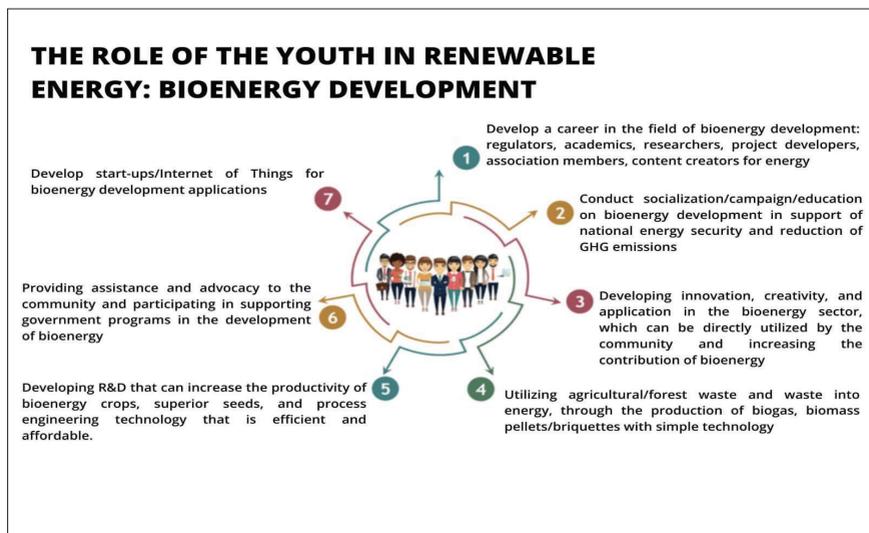
Information about renewable energy that the youth received mostly came from social media and some from teachers when they were in junior and senior high schools. Other sources that respondents get to find out about renewable energy are news, books, and articles they read or google themselves on the internet.

The respondents' ignorance about renewable energy was accompanied by the respondents' hopes as youths, namely, to be involved in issues or campaigns and to socialize renewable energy. As many as 68 respondents strongly agreed with youth involvement in campaigns and outreach, and only 4 respondents said it was just to get involved in the issue.

The data obtained show that youth basically understand and know about renewable energy. However, in reality, the role of youth has not been maximized in spreading campaigns or outreach to the community. Youth are also interested in getting involved in renew-

able energy issues. The government should be able to encourage and utilize the role of youth as agents of change to become aspirations and inspiration on renewable energy issues. As reported and conveyed by Andrah Feby Misna, Director of Bioenergy Direktorat Jenderal EBTKE, “one of the important actors in developing bioenergy is the younger generation, who can act as agents of change, who are active, adaptive, competitive, creative, and also master digital technology” (Direktorat Jenderal EBTKE, 2021).

Furthermore, the role and contribution of youth can be carried out in various lines. Youth do not only play a role in academic fields such as research development, but can also take advantage of digital communication platforms in disseminating information and knowledge related to renewable energy. As described in the Bioshare Series #5 activity, with the theme "Young Generation for Development of Bioenergy and Clean Energy" (Direktorat Jenderal EBTKE, 2021), the role of youth is described as in Figure 8.1.



Source: Direktorat Jenderal EBTKE (2021)

Figure 8.1 The Role of the Young Generation in the Development of Bioenergy

Figure 8.1 shows the roles in which the youth can participate. There are seven main roles of youth in the development of bioenergy or renewable energy. Role no. 2 is interesting and in line with what researchers are doing, namely, the active participation of youth in socializing or educating about renewable energy.

Youth are considered active, collaborative, and effective in helping disseminate information and knowledge as well as educate the public on renewable energy issues. Coupled with current technological advances, youth can also use social media and various other media in renewable energy campaigns. If youth can participate actively, development communication in terms of renewable energy can be maximized. Why does development communication become the target of youth empowerment? This is because youth can quickly absorb innovation and play a role in disseminating the expected information and education to the community.

In line with development communication, it is hoped that youth participation will enable youth empowerment so that youth will become more aware of their important role in the development of a nation. In addition, communication development can be built through existing social media that is actively used by youth. From these channels, the role and empowerment of youth can be increased. It is hoped that, as Figure 8.1 shows, the young generation can conduct socialization/campaign/education on renewable energy. Further to this, the results obtained from the survey show that there is a strong desire for youth to participate in campaigning for renewable energy issues.

D. Youth Empowerment and Media

A survey conducted by researchers shows that many young people want to be involved in campaigns or socialization of renewable energy. According to respondents, the role of youth is necessary because youth have a very important role to play in creating positive changes for the future. The younger generation is more acceptable to novel things. Youth are very happy to try something new and different.

They are inspired to create environmentally friendly technology so that renewable energy can be utilized even better and more and more people know about renewable energy. Also, because youth are the next baton for leadership, they must really understand the policies made, especially policies regarding renewable resources.

Some of the opinions of these respondents show that there is a high interest from youth to be empowered and involved in development, especially regarding renewable energy. This is what the government can do in terms of youth empowerment.

More about youth empowerment, the survey conducted also showed that youth are more likely to utilize existing media. The media in question is social media and other internet-based media. This is because by using the internet, apart from being more effective and efficient, young people can also connect quickly with anyone and then campaign for renewable energy issues. Data show that almost 90% of respondents stated that social media is the most effective and efficient channel in disseminating information about renewable energy.

The media chosen by respondents to assist the government in terms of development communication are media that are familiar with the community, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and other media that can provide good support. Some examples that are already exist for the renewable energy campaign from youth are TikTok account @xeronav, @clarissachristiyan, @energibersih.ftw, and many more. The account @energibersih.ftw is consistent in voicing and giving information about renewable energy. Also, on other social media such as Instagram, there are some accounts who concern about the renewable energy, i.e., @official_energiterbarukan, @nasional_energi_terbarukan, @renewableenergy.itn, and others. It is an interesting fact that the young generation are aware about this issue and some of them have already used social media to give more information about the renewable energy. From their participation and awareness of these issues, it can be said that the development communication has been built and kept continuing among the youth.

Several examples of the media usage of renewable energy campaigns from the young generation prove that the youth concerned about the further condition of energy. By utilizing these media, they are accessed by the community on a daily basis, so the hope is that the community can quickly find out and understand about renewable energy.

E. Government and Renewable Energy Campaign

The researcher closed the survey by asking what kind of government's role was in campaigning for or socializing renewable energy. Respondents' answers varied, including holding energy-saving campaigns for schools, campuses, and remote towns or villages. The government always invites people to save energy and the government must facilitate and support renewable energy campaigns.

Youth also expect the government to encourage their people to make the use of renewable energy a culture and a lifestyle for each individual, for a better, cleaner, and more equitable Indonesia development. The government should also provide ways to create renewable energy and provide space for young people to create renewable energy and make more use of renewable energy, such as Portugal, which has succeeded in utilizing renewable energy.

Creating a new trend in society by campaigning for the use of renewable energy in everyday life and uploading videos on social media using hashtags #energyrenewableforourfuture can also be carried out by the government. Then, youth also expect education for all officials from the top to their subordinates, as well as working with well-known media so that information and knowledge about renewable energy can be conveyed more quickly. Furthermore, socialization adapts to the digitalization era to make it easier to access for anyone.

The youth's hopes should be used as a reference for the government to be able to collaborate with youth and the media on renewable energy issues. When the role and empowerment of youth can be properly responded to, youth as agents of change feel that they have

played an active and participatory role in development and are able to communicate well with the target community in accordance with the government's expectations and goals.

F. Closing

It is interesting that, in fact, youths want to be involved in development in Indonesia. Youth empowerment needs to be carried out continuously by the government to assist the government in communicating what is the goal of development in Indonesia at this time, especially in the issue of renewable energy.

Youth involvement can be started by utilizing existing media to help campaign or socialize renewable energy to the community. It can be said that there should be good cooperation between the government and youth. Align with the youth's hopes for the government previously mentioned, the researchers feel optimistic that information and knowledge about renewable energy will be conveyed to the wider community so that people are starting to be aware of the existing energy and can switch to renewable energy.

References

- Direktorat Jenderal EBTKE. (2021, November 10). *Peran generasi muda dalam pengembangan bioenergi*. Kementerian Energi dan Sumber Daya Mineral. <https://ebtke.esdm.go.id/post/2021/11/11/3010/peran.generasi.muda.dalam.pengembangan.bioenergi>
- Harjanto, I. (2011). *Teori pembangunan*. Universitas Brawijaya Press.
- Koaksi Indonesia. (2019, December 2). *Sumber EBT tersedia, masyarakat rela bayar lebih mahal*. Coaction Indonesia. <https://coaction.id/sumber-ebt-tersedia-masyarakat-rela-bayar-lebih-mahal/>
- Nasution, Z. (2009). *Komunikasi pembangunan: Pengenalan teori dan penerapannya* (Edisi revisi). Rajawali Pers.
- Rijanto, M. W., & Armawi, A. (2011). Peran pemda dan masyarakat dalam pengembangan energi alternatif terbarukan untuk mendukung ketahanan energi (studi di Kabupaten Sumedang, Propinsi Jawa Barat). *Jurnal Ketahanan Nasional*, 16(3), 35–52. <https://garuda.kemdikbud.go.id/documents/detail/555188>

- Rogers, E. M., & Shoemaker, F. F. (1981). *Memasyarakatkan ide-ide baru* (A. Hanafi, Penerj.). Usaha Nasional. (Karya original diterbitkan 1971).
- Saputra, B., Fajri, H., Akmal. A. D., Wahyuni, N., & Halawa, H. S. (2021). Agree or disagree: Local youth's perception of renewable energy development. In *IOP conf. series: Earth and environmental science* (Article 012038). IOP Publishing Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/896/1/012038>
- Theresia, A., Andini, K. S., Nugraha, P. G. P., & Mardikanto, T. (2014). *Pembangunan berbasis masyarakat: Acuan bagi praktisi, akademis, dan pemerhati pengembangan masyarakat*. CV Alfabeta.
- Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 40 Tahun 2009 tentang Kepemudaan. (2009). https://www.dpr.go.id/dokjdih/document/uu/UU_2009_40.pdf