

Strengthening Community Awareness and Participation through the Red and White Village Cooperative Outreach Program in Bojong Nangka Village, Bogor Regency

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Abstract. The establishment of the Red and White Village Cooperative represents an initiative for strengthening village-based economic institutions and promoting community participation in economic development. However, the effectiveness and sustainability of such an initiative depend on community understanding, awareness, and willingness to participate. This community engagement program aimed to strengthen community awareness and participation in the Red and White Village Cooperative program in Bojong Nangka Village, Bogor Regency, West Java. The program employed a participatory and educational approach involving 115 community members. The implementation consisted of preliminary coordination, needs identification, educational material preparation, outreach and education, discussion, and evaluation. Educational materials addressed cooperative concepts and objectives, membership mechanisms, members' roles and rights, potential business activities, and opportunities for community participation. The effectiveness of the activity was assessed using pre-test and post-test questionnaires, complemented by observations of participant engagement during discussions and question-and-answer sessions. The results demonstrated an improvement in participants' awareness and understanding, with the average score increasing from 52.2% in the pre-test to 82.6% in the post-test, representing a 30.4-percentage-point improvement. Improvements were observed across all indicators, including understanding of cooperative concepts, objectives, membership mechanisms, awareness of participation opportunities, and willingness to participate. The greatest improvement occurred in awareness of participation opportunities, which increased by 33.9 percentage points. These findings indicate that participatory outreach can serve as an effective initial strategy for strengthening knowledge and encouraging community engagement. Continued mentoring, cooperative management training, financial literacy, and participatory governance are recommended to translate increased awareness into sustained participation and support long-term cooperative development.

Keywords: Red and White Village Cooperative; community empowerment; community participation; cooperative education.

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1. Introduction

Rural economic development increasingly requires institutional arrangements that are not only oriented toward economic growth but also capable of strengthening community participation, collective capacity, and local ownership. In this context, cooperatives represent an important institutional mechanism because they combine economic objectives with principles of collective ownership, mutual cooperation, democratic participation, and shared responsibility. Cooperatives can provide communities with opportunities to mobilize local resources, improve access to economic services, strengthen social networks, and develop collective responses to local economic challenges [1], [2]. From a community development perspective, cooperative organizations can also function as participatory institutions through which community members are involved not merely as beneficiaries but as owners and active participants in organizational decision-making.

The importance of participation becomes particularly relevant in rural development because the sustainability of community-based programs depends substantially on the extent to which local residents understand, accept, and actively engage with the programs introduced in their communities. Previous research in Indonesia has demonstrated that community participation is closely associated with the effectiveness of village development initiatives. Nugrahani et al. [3], for example, found that social capital and community participation constitute important resources for village development, while Jannah and Rodiyah [4] showed that community involvement is an important dimension of participatory village development planning. Similarly, Prasetyo and Firdauzi et al. [5] identified participation as a critical component of community empowerment, while noting that unequal power relations can constrain meaningful involvement. These findings indicate that the establishment of an economic institution at the village level should be accompanied by mechanisms that enable residents to understand its objectives, functions, benefits, and opportunities for participation.

Social capital further provides an important foundation for developing community-based economic institutions. Trust, social networks, reciprocity, and collective action can facilitate cooperation among community members and strengthen the capacity of local institutions to achieve shared objectives. Research on Indonesian cooperatives has shown that participation in cooperative organizations can contribute to social capital formation, particularly through the development of trust and social interaction [6], [7]. International evidence likewise indicates that members' social networks are associated with their willingness to participate in cooperative governance [8], [9]. Cooperative organizations can therefore serve not only as economic institutions but also as platforms for strengthening interpersonal relationships, collective learning, and community engagement. The relevance of cooperative-based development has become increasingly significant in Indonesia following the introduction of the Red and White Village/Urban Village Cooperative (*Koperasi Desa/Kelurahan Merah Putih*). Through Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2025, the Indonesian government established a strategic framework for accelerating the establishment, development, and revitalization of 80,000 Red and White Village/Urban Village Cooperatives. The policy emphasizes coordinated implementation across ministries and local governments and includes activities related to cooperative institutional development, business development, human resource strengthening, education, training, mentoring, and monitoring. The program is designed to strengthen village economic institutions while taking into account local characteristics, village potential, and existing economic organizations. Consequently, its implementation requires more than the formal establishment of cooperative entities; it also requires community understanding and meaningful participation in the development and management of the cooperative.

The emerging literature on the Red and White Village Cooperative reinforces the importance of this participatory dimension. Recent studies indicate that community participation is a strategic factor in determining the sustainability of the cooperative because community members occupy multiple positions as beneficiaries, members, owners, and participants in decision-making processes. At the same time, challenges remain in terms of managerial capacity, cooperative literacy, governance, and the ability to encourage broader community involvement [10], [11]. Research on community-based establishment of the Red and White Village Cooperative has similarly emphasized the importance of participatory approaches, needs assessment, training, organizational planning, and community facilitation in developing the institution [12]. The need to strengthen community understanding is also supported by broader evidence concerning cooperative performance in Indonesia. A study of Indonesian cooperatives identified member participation, cooperative membership, governance structures, collective action, and other institutional factors as important determinants of cooperative performance [13]. This suggests that the effectiveness of a cooperative cannot be separated from the quality and intensity of member involvement. Similarly, recent research on community empowerment in rural Indonesia highlights the importance of social, psychological, and economic capital in supporting successful empowerment programs [14]. Community empowerment should therefore be understood not simply as the delivery of information or assistance but as a process of building knowledge, confidence, capacity, and opportunities for local people to participate actively in development.

In this context, outreach and community education constitute important initial mechanisms for translating a national cooperative policy into a locally understood and participatory initiative. Information concerning the objectives of the Red and White Village Cooperative, membership opportunities, cooperative principles, potential business activities, community benefits, rights and responsibilities of members, and mechanisms for participation needs to be communicated in an accessible manner. This is particularly important because the formal existence of

participatory institutions does not automatically guarantee substantive participation. Studies of village development in Indonesia have identified limited information, weak community awareness, unequal access to decision-making processes, and inadequate capacity as factors that can constrain meaningful participation [15], [16]. Bojong Nangka Village, Bogor Regency, provides a relevant local context for community outreach concerning the Red and White Village Cooperative. As the program requires active engagement from local residents, strengthening community awareness constitutes an important preparatory step before participation can develop into sustained involvement. The outreach program is therefore positioned not merely as a dissemination activity but as an empowerment-oriented intervention intended to create shared understanding, encourage dialogue, and stimulate community willingness to participate in the cooperative's development. Such an approach is consistent with the broader principle that rural development becomes more sustainable when local communities are actively involved in identifying needs, developing institutions, implementing activities, and evaluating outcomes.

Based on this context, the present community engagement program aims to strengthen community awareness and participation through an outreach program on the Red and White Village Cooperative in Bojong Nangka Village, Bogor Regency. The activity focuses on improving residents' understanding of the cooperative's purpose, principles, potential functions, membership opportunities, and community participation mechanisms. By providing accessible information and creating opportunities for interaction and discussion, the program seeks to establish a stronger foundation for community involvement in the development of a locally relevant, participatory, and sustainable cooperative institution.

2. Method

This community engagement program employed a participatory and educational approach aimed at strengthening community awareness and participation in the Red and White Village Cooperative program. The activity was conducted in Bojong Nangka Village, Bogor Regency, West Java, Indonesia, with local community members as the primary participants. The location was selected based on the relevance of the Red and White Village Cooperative program to local economic development and the need to enhance community understanding of its objectives, functions, membership mechanisms, potential business activities, and opportunities for participation. Accordingly, the program was designed as an outreach intervention that integrated information delivery, interactive discussion, and community dialogue to facilitate knowledge development and encourage active community involvement in the cooperative. The implementation followed a systematic and sequential process consisting of preliminary coordination, needs identification, educational material preparation, outreach delivery, interactive discussion, and evaluation. Each stage was designed to support the subsequent stage, beginning with identifying the local context and participants' initial understanding and continuing with the delivery and evaluation of the educational intervention. The overall sequence of the community engagement activities is presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Stages of the Community Engagement Program

The implementation of the program began with preliminary coordination involving the community engagement team, village authorities, and relevant local stakeholders. This stage focused on determining the activity schedule, participant characteristics, venue, and technical requirements. Following the coordination process, a brief needs assessment was conducted through informal discussions and direct observations to identify participants' initial understanding of cooperatives and the Red and White Village Cooperative program. The

findings from this assessment were subsequently used to adapt the educational materials and communication strategies to the local context, ensuring that the information provided was accessible and relevant to participants with diverse educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. Based on the identified needs, the next stage involved preparing educational materials related to the Red and White Village Cooperative. The materials covered the concept and objectives of the cooperative, cooperative principles, members' roles and rights, organizational structure, potential business activities, expected benefits for the village community, and mechanisms for community participation. The materials were developed using simple and contextual language and supported by visual presentations and practical examples to facilitate participants' understanding. This preparation stage provided the foundation for the implementation of the main outreach and education session.

The main intervention was subsequently delivered through a community education and outreach session. The materials were presented through short lectures supported by visual presentations and practical examples, followed by question-and-answer sessions and facilitated discussions. A participatory communication strategy was applied throughout the activity to encourage participants to express their views, raise questions, identify local economic needs, and discuss possible forms of involvement in the cooperative. Participants were also encouraged to relate the cooperative concept to existing economic activities and local resources in Bojong Nangka Village. This approach was intended to make the learning process more contextual, interactive, and relevant to participants' everyday economic circumstances. Following the educational session and interactive discussion, an evaluation was conducted to assess changes in participants' awareness and understanding. A structured questionnaire was administered before and after the intervention in the form of a pre-test and post-test. The questionnaire measured participants' knowledge of the Red and White Village Cooperative, understanding of its objectives and functions, awareness of membership and participation opportunities, and willingness to participate in cooperative activities. The pre-test was administered before the educational session, while the post-test was conducted immediately after the presentation and discussion. In addition to the questionnaire, participant engagement was observed throughout the activity, particularly during the discussion and question-and-answer sessions. These observations served as complementary qualitative evidence of participants' involvement and responses to the intervention.

The evaluation data were analyzed descriptively by comparing the pre-test and post-test results. The analysis focused on changes in the average scores of participants' awareness and understanding following the outreach activity. The percentage change between the pre-test and post-test scores was calculated to indicate the magnitude of improvement following the educational intervention. Participant engagement was also documented based on attendance, involvement in discussions, questions raised, and expressions of interest in participating in cooperative activities. The qualitative observations were summarized descriptively to complement the quantitative findings and provide contextual insights into participants' responses. The combination of pre-test and post-test results with observations of participant engagement provided an integrated basis for assessing the immediate educational outcomes of the program and the initial potential for strengthening community participation in the Red and White Village Cooperative in Bojong Nangka Village.

3. Results and Discussion

The community engagement program on the Red and White Village Cooperative was successfully implemented in Bojong Nangka Village, Bogor Regency, involving 115 community members. The activity was designed to strengthen participants' awareness and understanding of the Red and White Village Cooperative while encouraging their willingness to participate in cooperative activities. The implementation consisted of educational presentations, interactive discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and an evaluation using pre-test and post-test questionnaires. The evaluation results provide empirical evidence of changes in participants' understanding and awareness following the outreach intervention. The evaluation results are presented in Table 1. Overall, the findings indicate a substantial improvement across all five evaluation indicators. The average participant score increased from 52.2% in the pre-test to 82.6% in the post-test, representing an improvement of 30.4 percentage points. The increase across all indicators suggests that the educational intervention contributed to strengthening participants' understanding of the cooperative program and their awareness of opportunities for participation.

Table 1. Results of the Community Awareness and Participation Evaluation

Evaluation Indicator	Pre-test	Post-test	Improvement
Understanding of cooperative concepts	52.20%	82.60%	30.40%
Understanding of cooperative objectives	55.70%	85.20%	29.50%
Understanding of membership mechanisms	48.70%	79.10%	30.40%
Awareness of participation opportunities	50.40%	84.30%	33.90%
Willingness to participate	53.90%	81.70%	27.80%
Average	52.20%	82.60%	30.40%

Source: Community engagement evaluation data, 2026.

The first indicator, understanding of cooperative concepts, increased from 52.2% to 82.6%, with an improvement of 30.4 percentage points. This finding indicates that the outreach activity was effective in introducing the fundamental concept of the Red and White Village Cooperative to participants. Before the intervention, approximately half of the measured response level reflected adequate understanding, whereas the post-test results indicated substantially higher understanding. The improvement can be associated with the use of accessible explanations, visual presentations, practical examples, and opportunities for participants to clarify information through discussion. This finding is consistent with the role of cooperatives as community-based institutions that require members to understand both their economic and collective dimensions [2].

Understanding of the objectives of the Red and White Village Cooperative increased from 55.7% to 85.2%, representing a 29.5-percentage-point improvement. The relatively high post-test result indicates that participants were better able to identify the purpose and expected role of the cooperative after receiving the educational materials. The result is important because community participation is more likely to be meaningful when community members understand why an institution is established and how its activities relate to their interests. Rather than perceiving the cooperative merely as a government-initiated program, participants were encouraged to understand it as a collective economic institution that requires community ownership and involvement. The largest improvement was observed in awareness of participation opportunities, which increased from 50.4% to 84.3%, or 33.9 percentage points. This was the highest increase among all evaluation indicators. The finding suggests that the outreach program was particularly useful in communicating how community members could become involved in the cooperative. Participation opportunities were discussed through concrete examples, including membership, involvement in cooperative activities, contribution to decision-making, and utilization of cooperative services. This result is important because formal institutional establishment does not automatically generate substantive community participation. Adequate information and opportunities for involvement are necessary conditions for encouraging community members to move from passive beneficiaries toward active participants.

The understanding of membership mechanisms also increased considerably, from 48.7% before the activity to 79.1% after the intervention, resulting in a 30.4-percentage-point improvement. This indicator had the lowest pre-test score among the five indicators, suggesting that participants initially had relatively limited understanding of how membership could function within the cooperative. The post-test improvement indicates that the educational session successfully clarified important aspects of membership. This is particularly relevant because cooperative organizations are based on member ownership and participation. Research on cooperative governance emphasizes that member involvement and social networks can influence participation in cooperative decision-making and organizational governance [17]. Therefore, improving knowledge of membership mechanisms represents an important foundation for developing an active membership base. The willingness to participate increased from 53.9% to 81.7%, representing an improvement of 27.8 percentage points. Although this was the smallest increase among the five indicators, the post-test result remained above 80%. This finding indicates that the outreach activity was associated not only with an improvement in cognitive understanding but also with an increase in participants' stated willingness to become involved. Nevertheless, willingness to participate should be interpreted as an immediate attitudinal outcome rather than evidence of sustained behavioral participation. Actual participation in cooperative activities requires continued opportunities, institutional support, transparent governance, and facilitation after the outreach program.

The overall increase from 52.2% to 82.6% demonstrates that the outreach intervention produced a meaningful immediate improvement in participants' awareness and understanding. The improvement of 30.4 percentage points across the five indicators suggests that the combination of educational presentations and participatory discussions was appropriate for introducing the cooperative program to the community. The results also demonstrate the value of using pre-test and post-test assessments in community engagement activities because they provide measurable evidence of changes following an intervention. Rather than relying solely on attendance or anecdotal observations, the evaluation provides quantitative evidence that can be used to document the immediate educational outcome of the program. The findings can also be understood from a community empowerment perspective. Community empowerment involves strengthening people's knowledge, capacities, confidence, and ability to participate in processes that affect their collective interests. The improvement in awareness of participation opportunities is particularly relevant because it indicates that participants gained a clearer understanding of how they could contribute to the cooperative. Previous research has shown that social capital, community participation, and local capacity are important elements in supporting village development and community empowerment [3], [5], [14]. In the context of the present activity, the outreach program provided an initial space for knowledge sharing and dialogue that could contribute to the development of these capacities.

The results further highlight the importance of participatory communication in implementing community-based economic programs. The educational session was not limited to one-way dissemination of information but incorporated questions, discussion, and contextual examples based on the economic conditions of Bojong Nangka Village. Such an approach enabled participants to connect the cooperative concept with their own experiences and potential economic activities. This is consistent with the argument that cooperative institutions can contribute to community development by creating opportunities for collective action, social interaction, and shared economic participation [2], [9]. The discussion component therefore served not only to clarify information but also to create an initial environment for developing community ownership of the cooperative initiative. The findings have practical implications for the subsequent development of the Red and White Village Cooperative in Bojong Nangka Village. The relatively high post-test scores indicate that participants had acquired a stronger initial understanding of the program; however, knowledge improvement alone is insufficient to guarantee long-term cooperative participation. Follow-up activities are therefore necessary to translate awareness into practical involvement. Future community engagement can focus on cooperative management, financial literacy, digital administration, business planning, product development, marketing, member rights and responsibilities, and participatory governance. Continuous mentoring can also help ensure that community members have opportunities to apply the knowledge gained during the outreach activity.

The results should nevertheless be interpreted within the scope of the evaluation design. The post-test was administered immediately after the educational intervention, meaning that the findings primarily reflect short-term changes in awareness and understanding rather than long-term behavioral changes. In addition, willingness to participate represents participants' stated intentions and does not necessarily indicate actual future participation in cooperative activities. Future evaluations should therefore include follow-up measurements to determine whether the improvement in awareness is sustained and whether it leads to measurable changes in membership, participation in meetings, involvement in decision-making, utilization of cooperative services, and contribution to cooperative business activities. Overall, the community engagement program involving 115 participants demonstrated that participatory outreach and education can provide an effective initial mechanism for strengthening community awareness of the Red and White Village Cooperative. The increase in the average evaluation score from 52.2% to 82.6%, together with improvements across all five indicators, demonstrates a positive immediate educational outcome. The strongest improvement occurred in awareness of participation opportunities, while willingness to participate also increased substantially. These findings suggest that community education can establish an important foundation for developing informed and engaged cooperative members. Sustained mentoring, capacity building, and participatory governance are subsequently required to transform this initial awareness into continuous community participation and support the long-term development of the Red and White Village Cooperative in Bojong Nangka Village.

4. Conclusion

The community engagement program on the Red and White Village Cooperative in Bojong Nangka Village, Bogor Regency, successfully strengthened participants' awareness and understanding of the cooperative program.

Involving 115 community members, the program demonstrated an increase in the average evaluation score from 52.2% in the pre-test to 82.6% in the post-test, representing a 30.4-percentage-point improvement. Improvements were observed across all evaluated indicators, including understanding of cooperative concepts and objectives, membership mechanisms, awareness of participation opportunities, and willingness to participate. The largest improvement was recorded in awareness of participation opportunities, which increased by 33.9 percentage points. These findings indicate that participatory outreach combining educational presentations, interactive discussions, and contextual examples can provide an effective initial mechanism for strengthening community understanding and encouraging engagement with the Red and White Village Cooperative. However, the findings reflect short-term educational outcomes and do not yet demonstrate sustained behavioral participation. Therefore, continued mentoring and capacity-building activities are recommended, particularly in cooperative management, financial literacy, business development, digital administration, and participatory governance, to translate increased awareness into sustained community participation and support the long-term development of the cooperative.

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