

**Symposium 3: Individuals, families, communities...What are the targets for social work and social policies?**

**EMPOWERING THE COMMUNITY AS AN EFFORT TO REVIVE  
THE CULTURE OF SELF RELIANCE IN COMMUNITY SOCIAL  
SECURITY**

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The Indonesian National Council on Social Welfare (INCSW) was officially established in 1975 as a social organization. The aims of INCSW are:

- To coordinate Social Organizations and their efforts in social developments
- To study problems commonly shared by various communities in Indonesia
- Extending cooperation in a relationship of mutual trust and benefit

INCSW focuses its programs on Social Empowerment, listening to what they have to say about their problems and offer ideas for possible solution. INCSW shares the experience of member organizations and other relevant organizations in solving social problems. INCSW develops effective national and international training programs for institutions and administrators throughout Indonesia. ICSW budget has been supported by the central and local government of Indonesia, communities and supplemented by local, national and international donors for training and program activities.

Because much of what was done and learned flowed sequentially, with experience guiding next steps throughout the process, this report will summarize what was learned along the way about how our organization and its members assist our community solve their social and development problems. We may not have all the answers, but from the projected population can be seen a rapid growth of the young people with lack of education and training, poverty and lack of employment which eventually bring about problems and challenges.

It is common knowledge that by-and-large the under-privileged communities are given appropriate social assistance support through the generally known Social safety net. In many modern societies Social Safety Net generally provides the appropriate financial support, employment generation, or through other means guaranteeing sustenance for the under-privileged families and individuals till they are able to function normally. These supports are usually regulated or done by the government through an especially established mechanism, such as to social insurance corporations.

Theoretically there are a minimum of three categories of Social Safety Net, i.e.:

1. The traditional kinds of Social Safety Networks based on the values of social cohesiveness (*Gotong Royong*) among community members in a given society. If and when a member encounters unfortunate circumstance, other families opens up to give assistance;
2. Social Safety Net provided and managed by companies and corporations for their own employees who are in need or dismissed from their work;
3. Modern Social Safety Net managed by the government or corporations as an effort to provide protection to members or the community so that they are not marginalized when and if they encounter adverse conditions, or by whatever reasons are poverty stricken or have to endure unfortunate situations.

In many country situations it is common that those who are in power desires to join or enter into efforts to increase the social safety net, especially when they are confronted with undesirable conditions of the people. It is unfortunate that many developing societies often emulate and apply social safety net concepts of the developed countries. They often ignore the prevailing social safety net values which have been inherited for many generations and befitting their respective environs. Furthermore, their managerial and financial capacities are no match against the magnitude of demand for social protection of their own peoples.

On the other hand, policy decision-makers from the developing nations also often depreciate the potentials of their own societies, who although poor, they have the power arising from the cohesive bond to help themselves. Moral encouragement and support, though minute may be significant to enhance happiness if those are coming from among family and relatives or from the neighborhood. Often governments fail to recognize that these elements are still incumbent, and therefore little, if at all, are being done to preserve these positive norms which, in turn, are the living social assets within the community.

In this light, Indonesia is striving hard to modernize its Social Safety Net, on the one hand, and to revive and reinvigorate its supportive societal assets and norms, on the other, by developing the Family Empowerment Posts (POSDAYA) at the grass roots. These Posts are indeed the village institutions for empowering the family and the community. In turn, empowerment is directed to revive cultural and societal assets, i.e. the *Gotong Royong* spirit to care for the plight of all members. These Posts are also instrumental to convince the society that the preservation of the *Gotong Royong* spirit is essential and that it should prevail even though the modern Social Safety Net provided by the government in its many forms, e.g. social insurance to offset calamities, are actually in place.

Community Social Safety Net adhering to cultural and societal norms and values will be manifested in the social movement towards mutual assistance based on the *Gotong Royong* spirit, resulting in the sense of common community security, bringing about happiness and tranquility.

Jakarta, June 2008