Community Changes and Engagement: Towards a Klagen Smart Village in Indonesia

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Rural community engagement is the basis of the rural development process and its sustainability. When the local community is involved, a sense of ownership may arise. This study examines Klagen local people engagement towards their village changing process into a smart village at the initial stage. The data are collected through three stages of empowerment program: planning, youth business training and women entrepreneurship education. The study indicates that local community is development initiators in which they feel the need to change for a better community, envision how and what should be changed, critically analyse their own strengths, weakness, barriers and observational practical learners. All Klagen community elements participate in actualising their smart village vision, including youth and women. Together, the youth are learning and planning to start village business, while the women are prepared to be women entrepreneurs by equipping them skills to make red onion crackers. They also become potential contiguous developers who disseminate the new knowledge through family welfare program women association and practice together. Klagen smart village empowerment process is enabled by some facilitating factors, including financial support, community support, acceptance, trust and sense of belongingness, need to change, supportive leadership, partnership with local government, availability of operationing organisations as well as potential agricultural products.

Keywords: *Smart village, community participation and engagement, community of practice, community change*

Introduction

The local community is a vital human resource for their regional/local development. They are potential inhabitants to develop their own areas. Their diversities, local knowledge, traditional/local skills, sense of belonging and community as well as local area analysis, understanding and adaptation are significant resources for local development. Local/region development needs to be supported by all layers of community members. Participation, motivation and energy to develop should be devoted by men, women, youth as well as children at any sector and profession, even the migrated community members. Involvement and engagement to build villages or their hometown together at the initial development to sustaining stages can increase community creativity and innovation, initiatives, critical analysis, social cohesiveness, communication, collaborative problem solving, community bond, responsibility, shared identity, social support and acceptance, participative culture as well as development commitment to maintain their works. Thus, examining how community can be involved is significant in promoting local area development.

This study aims to examine the participation of Klagen community in changing their ordinary village to a smart village. The initiative and initial development of Klagen, Nganjuk smart village is the focused area of the study. How the community participates and engages in developing their areas at the initial stage towards a smart village are the primary aim of the study since community involvement and engagement provides log-term investment for regional as well as local development sustainability.

Community Participation, Change and Development

The local community is a vital development resource. They will be the ones who accept the consequences of development in their region. Moreover, they will be the sustainers of the development of the area. Community participation is the heart of development at all stages: planning, process and maintenance. Community participation is fundamental for sustainable development (George et al., 2015; Miles & Samndong, 2015; Mwiru, 2015; Olajuyigbe, 2016; Walker, 2014).

Involving the community in the development of their area brings about many positive impacts on the developing community social and economic benefits, social education and character building, as well as development effectiveness, outcomes and sustainability. Community participation brings out community voices and stimulates collaboration which can potentially increase programs quality (Lukensmeyer et al., 2011, p. 11); is a means for empowerment and power sharing (Choguill, 1996; Khwaja, 2004, p. 429; Olajuyigbe, 2016, p. 98); creates democracy climate and mobilises support (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004); triggers collective learning (Paasivaara and Lassenius, 2014); provides more education, better policy

attainment, empowerment, deliberative democracy implementation, cost effectiveness and environmental management (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004, pp. 56–58); ensures development sustainability (Ceptureanu et al., 2018, p. 1); builds social facilitating behavior for successful development (Meyer, 2002, cited in Ceptureanu et al., 2018, p. 2); offers better social and economic condition for local participated community (Li, 2006, p. 133); leads to consensus (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004, p. 55); enables participated community to bring out their local/contextual knowledge (Sonn & Kasat, 2002, p. 12); designs development projects relevant to local needs (George et al., 2015, p. 12); emerges democratic innovation and protects local initiative right (Skidmore et al., 2006, p. 58); prevents local community from being passive victims (Bourke and Lockie, 2001); and controls the development project, reframes the focus, increases stakeholders quantity, explores unknown information and adds networks (Walker, 2014, p. 2).

Smart Village

Recently, the concept and building of a smart village are getting popular. Smart villages proliferate globally (Razak et al., 2013). Smart village is one of the SDGs implementations ("Envision 2030: 17 Goals to Transform the World for Persons with Disabilities", 2020, p. 1) and a response to social changes (Kan, 2006). Smart village is an innovative sustained planning method promoting continual collective learning as resources for rural development as part of broader regional and national development (Sutriadi, 2018, p. 8). The growth of smart village is determined by complex factors. The successful smart village is supported by the integrity of community, consideration on local history and culture, planning on special context, economic aspects, technology preparation, management on technological impacts and innovative technical and political process (Sutriadi, 2018, p. 8).

Many smart villages are also increasing in Indonesia. They are significantly growing as the issue of rural legislation, UU No. 2, 2014 on rural in Indonesia, which increases village innovation (Subekti & Damayanti, 2019). Moreover, it is driven by increasing rural democracy process and ICT trends in rural (Santoso et al., n.d.). It is expected that democracy climate, transparency, accountability and community participation can be enhanced by the emerging smart village rural development model (Santoso et al., n.d., p. 7). Various types of smart villages emerge in Indonesia: a village with smart tourism (for instance, Pulepayung), smart economy (Kulonprogo), smart governance (Dlingo) and smart living (kampung cyber) (Santoso et al., n.d.).

Research Method

The research was undertaken in Klagen, Nganjuk, East Java. Started from 2019, Klagen intends to change itself, from the ordinary village which focuses on bred onion agricultural
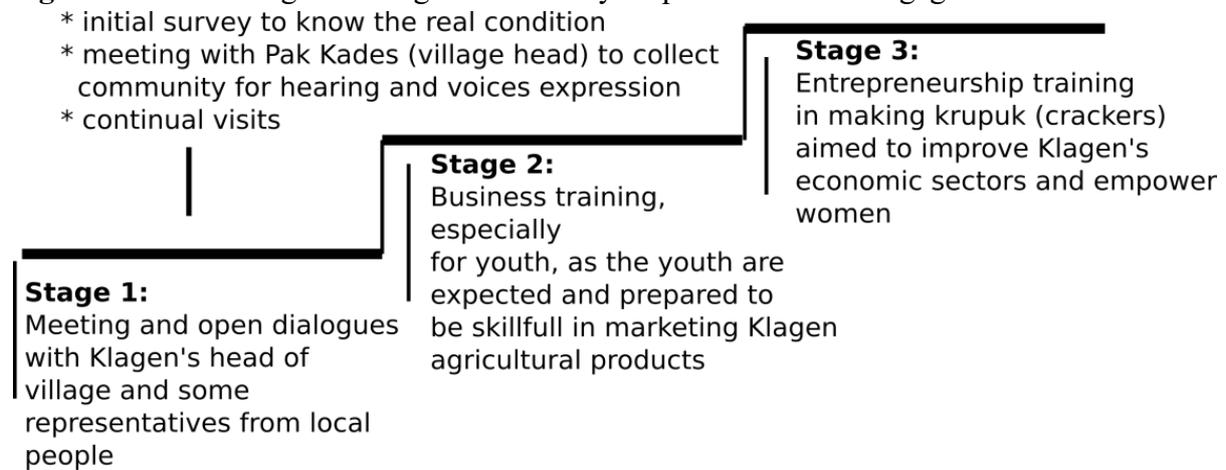
product to a smart village. It is still in the process to transform itself gradually. Typologically, Klagen is a farming village. It has around 210,6500 ha farming land, with the rural potential agricultural and poultry products on red onion, corn, coconut, mango, duck, and catfish (Kementerian Dalam Negeri Republik Indonesia. Direktorat Jenderal Bina Pemerintahan Desa, 2018). Demographically, the majority of Klagen are employees at private institutions, farmers/farm owners and farmworkers. From the aspect of educational level, the majority of Klagen people only finish their elementary school degree, only one people finishes his doctorate degree, and seven people hold a master degree (Kementerian Dalam Negeri Republik Indonesia. Direktorat Jenderal Bina Pemerintahan Desa, 2018). Klagen has several village infrastructure and facilities, including village office, health facilities (community health centre and integrated health service centre), education (schools, playing ground and religion institution), praying facilities, transportation, clean water, irrigation, sanitation, and sports facilities, other development facilities, including financial sources, formal village organisations and cultural-local based organisations and security (Kementerian Dalam Negeri Republik Indonesia. Direktorat Jenderal Bina Pemerintahan Desa, 2018).

Figure 1. The main road of Klagen as primary access to the whole village area

The study adopts a qualitative research method. The data are gathered through direct observation and natural participation on Klagen empowerment programs, as the intermediary actors. The programs aim to prepare Klagen community towards smart village by providing basic entrepreneurial knowledge for business and training to make krupuk red onion crackers, as a potential agricultural commodity in Klagen. The direct and participant observation is conducted in three main stages, as represented in figure 2 as follows.

Figure 2. Several stages of Klagen community empowerment and engagement

* initial survey to know the real condition
* meeting with Pak Kades (village head) to collect community for hearing and voices expression
* continual visits

Stage 3:
Entrepreneurship training in making krupuk (crackers) aimed to improve Klagen's economic sectors and empower women

Stage 2:
Business training, especially for youth, as the youth are expected and prepared to be skillfull in marketing Klagen agricultural products

Stage 1:
Meeting and open dialogues with Klagen's head of village and some representatives from local people

The multi-sources of empirical data are gathered along the empowerment process (stages 1-3). Audio data on dialogue recording are gathered from stage 1. The direct observation notes and activities pictures are gathered from stages 2 and 3. The data are collected using several instruments: a mobile phone recording tool, pen and paper, and a camera. The training manual designed by some participating higher education students from business management department is used as the main instrument in stage 2, and some cooking tools, as well as cracker ingredients, are used as research instrument in stage 3.

The collected data are classified based on community participation in 3 stages of empowerment programs. Identification of different roles of Klagen local people is generated from analysis on local people behaviour, actions and statements/saying during the three stages of the empowering process. Analysis of the collected data is undertaken by collecting all the data, exploring related themes and patterned regularities, interpreting, and linking data, interpretation and body of literature.

Findings and Discussion

The study demonstrates that Klagen's local people are motivated to change. They are willing to learn together. There are four development roles undertaken by Klagen community to enable rural changes: local community as initiators, learners and contiguous developers.

Local Community as Development Propellers and Initiators

The findings of the study revealed that from the empowerment program at stage 1 (brainstorming and dialogue with community), various contributing roles of participating village representatives in Klagen development plan towards a smart village are identified.

Table 1: Local community as development initiators

1	**One of the migrated senior community (S1):**	
	"This is the right moment. In cities, we have smart cities; we expect there will be a smart village. Please help us to develop any sector in our village; maybe we can start from entrepreneurship…" **(S1-1)**	Supporting, willingness and readiness to change, facilitating Klagen smart village by contacting and inviting external developing agents to come
2	**Head of village (S2):**	
	"I expect that we are, village people, also change. There are some changes to our village, be better and more developed than other villages." **(S2-1)**	Openness, intention and readiness to change
	"so, basically things which are relating to rural development, particularly services for community. We hope that we can provide better services for Klagen community, better than we can do now. Until now, we still do not have an online administrative system." **(S2-2)**	Being aware of the changes and development needs in community services, including online administration
3	**Secretary of the village (S3):**	
	"The majority of our community is farmers. Even though there are some people who have a non-farming occupation, the total number is very low. We have a strong passion for migrating to other areas. After settling in their new regions, they do not come back to the village." **(S3-1)**	Migration/leaving village for a better life as one of the development barriers
4	**Community representative 2 (S4)**	
	"…we understand the typical characteristics of the people. we are practitioners and know how to socialise…manage our ego and mobilise the people together." **(S4-1)**	Knowledge of local people character and mobilising strategies
5	**Community representative 3 (S5)**	
	"in the past, we are the lion of Rejoso. Now, the lion is sleeping. Looking at this situation, I want to awaken the lion, make it strong again…" **(S5-1)**	Sense of belongingness, historical pride and commitment
	"today is the selfi-era, I see it at the television. Together, I want to build something different from other villages. Concerning with *nyadran culture*. It is the traditional culture here. Every year, we slaughter buffalo, we share the meat for *slametan*." **(S5-2)**	Cultural identification, as part of local tourism commodity

6	**Community representative 4 (S6)**	
	"the uniqueness is here we slaughter buffalo. We also invite *tayuban* to entertain the people." **(S6-1)**	Identification of local cultural uniqueness
7	**Community representative 5-youth delegation (S7)**	
	" I think it will be better if youth gadget passion can be channelled to more positive and productive activities, for journalism, for instance. We teach them through training, workshop, maybe web design, photoshop. These skills can be an investment for their potential occupation, in or outside the village" **(S7-1)**	Need for youth empowerment

S=Statement

The findings demonstrate that the local community can be potential local development experts. They have multi contributing roles of local knowledge on their own region potential commodities to sell and uniqueness (S5-2; S4-1) better than external agents. Local people have more knowledge, and better understanding on their own community and region than external people who tend to possess scientific knowledge and participatory development approach can integrate two different knowledge strands (Olajuyigbe, 2016, p. 98). They can be grass root innovators, as committed civil society they may find uniqueness which differs from the mainstream (Barclay & Klotz, 2019; Hargreaves et al., 2013; Joshi & Yenneti, 2020). Collaborative knowledge among various local stakeholders, especially related to the locality-based factors: nature, human resources and culture leads to collaborative learning and innovation emergence (Matilainen et al., 2018).

Local people can be development initiators as they directly feel the need to change, which may indicate their openness for changing and stimulate change readiness (S1-1; S2-1; S2-2; S7-1). Klagen community behaviour reveals their willingness to cooperate and expect that the external developing agents can facilitate changes towards various dimensions of the smart village, including administrative, business, culture, tourism, education and agricultural sectors. Change intention, trust and welcoming behaviour of the local community is the key access for development intervention agents to make some local-relevant changes. Community support and commitment are the most vital factors in ensuring development success (Matilainen et al., 2018). Community acceptance and compliance is also one of the successful development determinants (Simón et al., 2019; Škamlová et al., 2020).

Local people are critical analysers and identifiers. They understand local social, behavioural patterns, successful probability, potential barriers and development limitations (S3-1; S4-1; S5-2; S6-1). Knowledge of local community dynamics can promote development. Lack of

knowledge of human factors, including community characters and attitudes towards development may hinder development (Wahid et al., 2017). The involved community can be reliable informants on strength and weakness of their own region. Local issues can be addressed through participatory development method (Joshi & Yenneti, 2020). Development sustainability can be effectively reached by incorporating local inhabitants to the executed project (Smits, 2019).

The committed and loyal local people are invaluable resources. They usually possess a strong emotional attachment to their beloved village. Pride and care sense can burn their motivation to be involved in their village progress, especially when they observe that their place is left behind than the neighbouring areas (S5-1). The data reveal that one of the community representatives (S1), is a migrated population who still cares about his village condition. To improve the condition, he finds development partners and invites them to come to Klagen for collaboratively to develop it. Local identity defines one's biological, emotional, social and cultural needs and basis for collective group action (Pei, 2019). Moreover, the sense of community is the antecedent of people's engagement (Kim & Cho, 2019, p. 304).

The data show that Klagen leader participates in community dialogue (S2). He encourages the community to express their voices and expectations and facilitates the community dialogue by inviting representatives from various community spheres: youth, senior members, migrated members, village-local administrative staff. He shared his power and guided the invited members to contribute in development planning. A community leader is potentially aiding the grass-root innovation, arriving at shared decision making and vision building (Martiskainen, 2017). Unlike unshared leadership which can hinder development (Leonard, 2019), communicative and cooperative leadership qualities are indicated as the most contributing factors in sustainable development (Bushell & Goto, 2011, p. 1248). Furthermore, local leaders are influential figures for mobilising people as well as understanding local history and traditional knowledge (Atanga, 2020, p. 11).

Figure 3. One of unsustained floral garden tourism in Nganjuk

The study shows that the inclusion of local people at the initial stage of development lays the substantive ground for development. Figure 1 shows the tourism development unsustainable, caused by predicted local community unawareness. Senses of being involved can empower the local community to be development propellers. Hearing local community voices and shared decision making participation aims to increase community through power redistribution (Wondirad & Ewnetu, 2019), sense of ownership (Matilainen et al., 2018), social bonding as part of social capital (Chriest & Niles, 2018), and feeling autonomy impacting on community acceptance (Devine-Wright & Wiersma, 2020), while community voices help external agents in prioritising process (Matilainen et al., 2018, p. 290). Lack of community involvement and participation lead to development failure (Martiskainen, 2017, p. 10).

Local Community as Learners of Development

The second changing stage is basic business training for *Klagen* youth. The training is attended by 32 local people participants. The training materials cover three main chapters: entrepreneurship, financial management and product development. The training implies that the local community should not be passive recipients of development, but the main doers and sustainers. Klagen people are locally knowledgeable. They understand the social, cultural and physical better than outside people. However, some academic knowledge and skills are absent. Thus, filling the knowledge gap and educating Klagen community, especially the youth for opening small-scale enterprises are required. As they understand the academic knowledge of business, they adapt, interpret and make it relevant to their village context. Education is one of SDGs aspects through which human resource is developed, and human right for dignity can be achieved (Ofei-Manu & Didham, 2018, p. 1173). Learning is the vehicle to achieve development goals (Weaver et al., 2019).

Figure 4. Business training for Klagen youth

Through Klagen Business training, Klagen youth form community of practice, which are responsible to implement and develop the newly-gained business knowledge and translate it in more practical ways. Genuine education should enable society to construct new knowledge rooted from their daily lives (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2003). The team is also responsible for distributing business knowledge in a way that other people understand the concept. Learning community relies on distributed knowledge (CoNceição et al., 2003), as some learners prefer to study directly from peers and neighbors or independent networks (Laforge & McLachlan, 2018, p. 265). This potential community of practice may contribute to development as the community is given chances to implement new knowledge and tools while strengthening social relationship (Abigail, 2016) and stimulating collective learning and action (Reed et al., 2014) as well as shared identity (Crowley et al., 2018).

The study finds that the local community is social learners for their region development. The committed and caring members are volunteering to learn from other neighbouring villages. As expressed by the secretary of the village in stage 1, dialogue with the local community is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Learning from other village models

Secretary of the village-S3	
"…people of Panggungharjo are very mobile. It is also closer to the city. Their recent business is culinary. The income is above the target. The targeted income in one year can be achieved in 6 months. It is a *joglo* culinary. It is quite similar to *mataraman*. Package is for one family, and they are guided to prepare all the cooking materials, cook and prepare the food by themselves…." **(S3-1)**	Learning tourism from Panggungharjo
"…they have village-owned enterprises, which provides loan for opening business" **(S3-2)**	Learning the economic sector from Panggungharjo
"…they also have waste management centre, where they can filter wasted oil and add the value on it" **(S3-3)**	Learning waste management from Panggungharjo
"…and handicraft, they produce handicrafts and build handicraft centre which accommodates UKMs and open it for edu-tourism." **(S3-4)**	Learning business and economic sector from Panggungharjo

S=statement

The data show that the village secretary learns from a neighbour village how to build a smart village. The learning takes place by direct natural observation on perceived successful village

model. Through his social learning experience, S3 develops vision on what his village (Klagen) may need to change. Social learning mainly happens informally (Rogge et al., 2020) and occurs within a certain situation in which the individual learners are becoming parts of social context (Reed, et. a., 2010, p. 6, cited in Rogge et al., 2020, p. 2) and context determines learning (Khalil et al., 2017). Through observing Pangungharjo, S3 is aware that Klagen should develop something unique and adapt to social trends, for instance, self-cook as edu-tourism in which the visitors are allowed to manage their own food, and they can enjoy the cooking process as well as the results. Social learning induces adaptive capacity and innovation (Phuong et al., 2017; Tran et al., 2018). After observing Panggungharjo village, S3 disseminate the knowledge and passion for changing their village into a smart village. Through dialogue with other community members and external agents, S3 facilitate group learning by hearing various perspectives, as social learning promotes group learning (Murti & Mathez-Stiefel, 2019, p. 434).

Local Women as Active and Contiguous Developers

The data from stage 3, Klagen women empowerment, through making krupuk red onion crackers, show that women are active learners. They are enthusiastically attending, learning by listening to tutor instruction and modelling. At the end of modelling, the women participants are practising making red onion crackers in groups.

Figure 5. *Krupuk Bawang merah* entrepreneurship training of women at *Klagen*

During red onion crackers entrepreneurship training, the women participants plan to disseminate their new knowledge to their peer through family welfare program (women association at the rural local scale). This plan can be an impetus for collaborative learning and action for developing their Klagen through women community of practice. This community

of practice enables social learning to take place (Tran et al., 2018, p. 33) in which collaboration and equal participation informal as well as informal situation is encouraged (Lowitt et al., 2015). The knowledge/skill dissemination through PKK can eliminate barriers of women participation in development since many women cannot attend training as they have to take care of their children/family and do their domestic work. Women still face a socio-cultural barrier in participating in development, including inequalities, misconceptions and disparities (UN (ESCAP), 2017, cited in Michalena et al., 2020, p. 2). In Indonesia context, taking care family, provide financial/economic support, accomplish daily household and ensure family daily need to be fulfilled are the main job of women. These regular activities frequently hinder them from developing their own selves. Women's life is mostly restricted to do domestic chores, such as cooking and cleaning (O'Hara & Clement, 2018, p. 115).

The knowledge dissemination through formal women organisation as well as informal daily interaction indicates that women are contiguous developing agents. They teach other women the way to improve their skill, family economic prospect and overall contribute to rural development. Community contiguous development presents when an individual or more engage in mutual learning from each other using social networks or community ties as well as community of practice (Mtika & Kistler, 2017).

Women at Klagen are the backbone of economic support. The training is targeted for women as women are potential developers for initiating and producing various red onion-based products. They usually understand how to cook well, budget the money, how to vary the product, how to improve its taste as well as quality as their domestic work associates with cooking. Women's traditional knowledge, as well as their collaborative work capacity, can contribute to product development and enable knowledge transfer (Montanari & Bergh, 2019). Moreover, women usually have detail local knowledge on their natural environment, intellectual and social capital allowing knowledge sharing through broad social networks (Michalena et al., 2020) and awareness and sensitivity on their environment changes (Shinbrot et al., 2019)

Klagen women entrepreneurship training is attended by the wife of the village leader, as the co-leader of the village leader, her husband. Her participation stimulates other women to learn together. This also indicates power distribution and sharing from the village leader to his wife. Women can be potential leaders or community representatives in development, even though traditional, gender roles and socio-cultural conventions frequently inhibit women leadership development (Shinbrot et al., 2019). The village leaders' wife co-leadership role reveals that women are partners of men in development. Women and men are allies in development (Shinbrot et al., 2019).

Figure 6. Involvement and engagement process of all stakeholders, men and women

Women are potential entrepreneurs. Klagen women are limited in their mobility as they are tied to household chores and level of education. Women are often isolated from the job market and require practical training (Carmi et al., 2019, p. 339). Thus, developing women entrepreneurship skills can be an option. However, Klagen women entrepreneurship process is still at the beginning. It requires the elimination of obstructing aspects, including men domination and overpower, lack of education, economic inadequacies (Özsungur, 2019) and some psychological factors, including low self-efficacy, as well as situational aspects: family pressures, the inadequacy of role model and firm performance (Ladge et al., 2019), the inadequacy of fund and low entrepreneurial skills (Nair, 2019). Growth of successful women entrepreneurs is the result of some operating factors of emotional management, balancing of push and pull aspects (Özsungur, 2019, p. 116). Some mitigating factors enhancing women attempt to be entrepreneurs should be promoted by increasing women self-efficacy, impacted women perception on the advantage of becoming entrepreneurs, built entrepreneurship identity and need to open a business and the presence of supporting situational factors: work-life support, mentorship and firm performance (Ladge et al., 2019).

Figure 7. Community participation model towards *Klagen* smart village
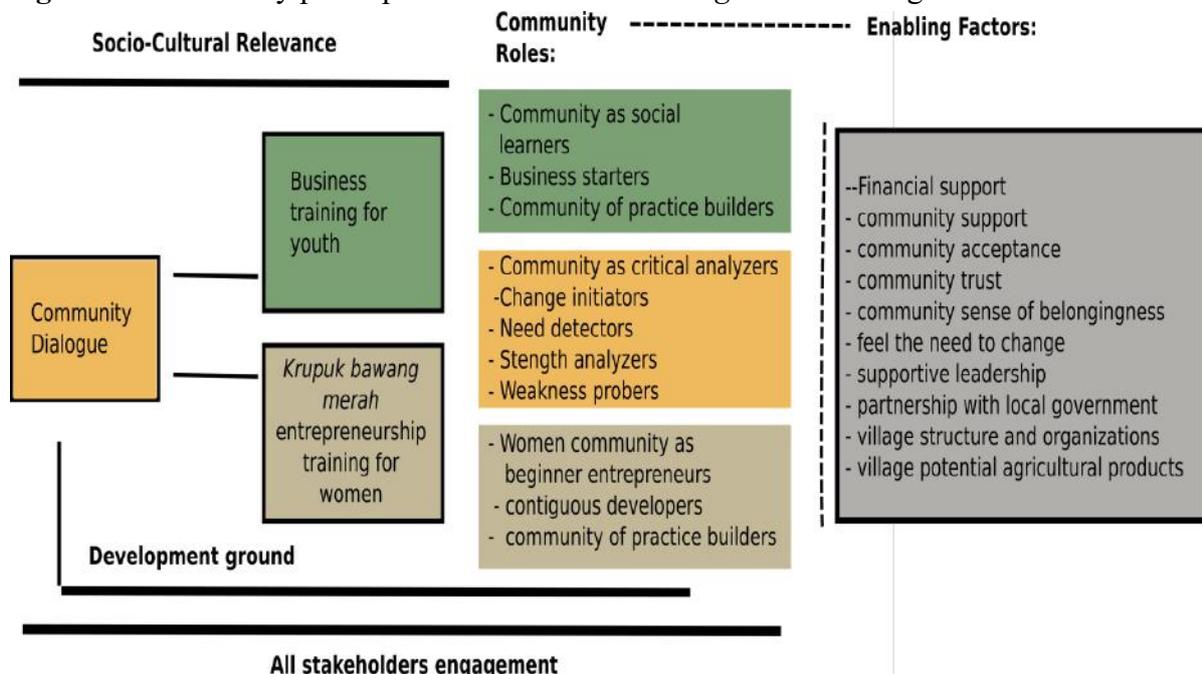
Klagen community participation and engagement towards a smart village is represented in figure 7. All the stakeholder engagement during the whole process ensures the progress of the development process, while community dialogue at the beginning of the process provides a sense of development direction. Various community roles are enabled by supporting factors, including financial support, community support, acceptance, trust and sense of belongingness, need to change, supportive community leadership, partnership with local government, availability of functioning organisations as well as potential agricultural products.

Conclusion

Rural community participation and engagement is the heart of rural development. The development process can be initiated when the local community feels the need to change. Change openness and readiness, development program acceptance and trust are the beginning access in rural changes. Local people's knowledge, awareness, sense of commitment and belongingness, critical analysis on village strengths and weaknesses, needs and community vision can provide development guidance. Local community development participation can be effectively mobilised through a bottom-up approach. Dialogue with the local community can provide a sense of direction, as they should be included to define their own prospect future collective life. In their attempt to change their village into a smart one, Klagen local community displays various contributing roles. During the planning/initial process, Klagen's community representatives are identifying potential resources, weakness, vision for changes, issues, barriers, and what they learn from perceived village models. To be self-sustained, they also participate in business learning activities, which are especially for *Klagen* young generation. They are aware that they possess local knowledge, but they have inadequate academic knowledge. Thus, *Klagen* community is willing to learn through provided training, direct natural observation and informally through community of practice. *Klagen* women are potential village entrepreneurs. During the empowerment program, they enthusiastically engage in making *krupuk Bawang Merah.* They are potential product innovators and contiguous learners through *PKK*.

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