



## A Brief Review Situation of Migrant Workers In Village Kota Datar, Sub-district of Hamparan Perak The District of Deli Serdang

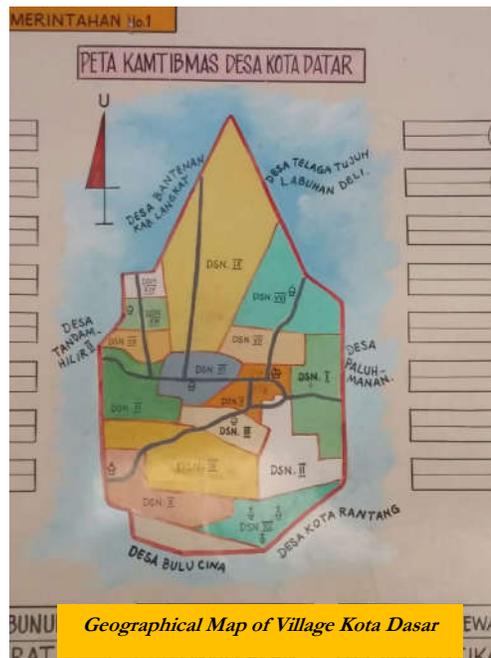
Being situated within the administrative area of Hamparan Perak sub-district, Village Kota Datar was first populated in 1950s with a name called Kampung Datar, and only then in 1979, this Kampung officially changed its name to be publicly known as Kota Datar.

This village covers an area of about 1,444 hectares wide; consisting of 975 hectares of paddy-fields, following 378 hectares of farming areas, 90 hectares of people's settlement, and 1 hectare wise is allocated as Public Cemetery or Graveyard.

Kota Datar is one among 20 village administrative units under Hamparan Perak sub-district, and is populated by 7.728 people, or about 1.691 households; comprising about 3.730 male and 3.998 female residents.

The number of residents aging under five years old comes at 935 people (382 male and 571 female); residents aging between 6 – 8 years old is 902 people (365 male and 537 female); residents aging between 9 – 13 years old is 935 people (331 male and 604 female); residents aging between 14 – 25 years old is 1,419 people (850 male and 569 female); residents aging between 26 – 41 years old is 967 people (393 male and 572 female); residents aging between 42 – 50 years old is 1,545 people (973 male and 572 female); and residents aging 51 and above is 1,007 people (436 male and 571 female).

Village Kota Datar, geographically at the northern side is bordering with village Telaga Tujuh, at the eastern side is bordering with



*Geographical Map of Village Kota Dasar*

village Palung Manan, at the southern side is bordering with village Perkebunan PTPN II Buluh Cina; and at western side is bordering with village Tandem Hilir II.

It is administratively led by the Kepala Desa (Kades) simply means Chief of Village Government, and is supported by 15 Kepala Dusun (Kadus) simply means Chief of Hamlets' Government.

The administrative system is equipped by BPD simply means Village Legislative Assembly, the LKMD simply means People's Consultative Assembly, the Polmas simply means Community Defence Police, and the PKK which simply means Family Welfare Building Service – that is normally led by a woman leader.

Temporary number of residents going out for work in Malaysia as migrant workers is 123 people; comprising 30 male and 93 female (the list is made available upon request, when necessary). Recent findings being collected so far there are reasons of going out for work in Malaysia, such as the scarcity of livelihoods in the village, the seasonal and relatively limited work opportunity (mainly available during planting and harvest season), and even so, it is hardly enough to survive the families.

The average wage of farming labors is only at IDR 50,000/day. For a daily labor with 4 children at home (the family of six), such an amount would indicate a subsistent living condition, by which every one in the family would survive with only more or less IDR 8,300, which means still too far below one dollar a day. Such an absolute poverty has become one major driving force pushing them to go out of the village to find work as migrant workers in Malaysia to fill out several sectors; industries, constructions, factories, rubber and palm oil plantations, and domestic servants.

Quite often, the economic related pressures have forced them to find any ways going to Malaysia for work as migrant workers, such as bulding connectivity with people who have been working in Malaysia for a long time, in its various other forms. The roles of brokers and manpower recruiters is allegedly blamed as to hugely contribute to inreasing demand of looking for work in foreign counities – among those at productive ages, either boys and girls. Much worse, it is even exacerbated by some illegal practices and falsification of data of ages and places of origins.

Becoming migrant workers with some debilities has often made them powerless without decent bargaining position, most especially when they are in a position of being face-to-face with brokers, agents and employers. They have to be so speechless, and not too much demanding for various situations which are benefitting them. They are left alone with no other choice and they even have to be passive recipients of any decisions imposed against them; they have to be obidient under any intimidation, discrimination and various other coersions, any any kind of deception, injustice as well as any type of inappropriate treatments. To some extent, many of them are victimized out of their ignorance regarding the prevailing rules and regulations, most especially about their rights and obligations as migarnt workers.



*Local Farmers are beginning to shift the land use and converting the farming land with palm-oil trees.*

This kind of condition is also generally experienced by other migrant workers from all over Indonesia despite minimum skill and expertise they possess. Brokers and agents are also becoming smart and cunning in a way they are doing recruitment; they organize all processes as to look they are real and legal, behind which actions they actually build deceptive pratices and fraudulence with state officers at different levels.

### **Pusaka Indonesia in Kota Datar**

As an organization committed to promoting and protecting the rights of children and women, there remains a few things that have been done so far by Pusaka Indonesia in village Kota Datar. Too much still resources to be allocated as to help improve the situation, most especially financial resources to mobilize office staff to live in the village.

So far, there has been a few things to have been conducted as a way to open the wider paths a head of time. Along with collaboration with village stakeholders, Pusaka Indonesia has done some necessary steps, a few among others to include:

1. Providing clean water facilities in a form of drilled wells with full support of Mercy Relief Singapore in 2010
2. Helping to build Women Groups of Clean Water Management that remain active until now as many as 5 groups.
3. Helping to build Saving/Lending Groups among women that remain active until now as many as 5 groups.
4. Providing training on Community-based Organizational Management.
5. Providing training on Community-based Organizational Leadership.
6. Providing training on Community-based Organizational Finance Management.
7. Providing Business Capital Support by way of revolving fund model.

### **Paradigm of Community Empowerment**

Being migrant workers in foreign country is seen simply as merely a logical consequence of people's inability of their economy, poverties, and lack of skill as well as expertise to deal with their situation. Such a trend is believed and can be approached by restoring local belief, spirit and awareness over potentials that they actually possess which are not yet utilized in maximum ways.



*The shifting trend of farming land gradually brings local life-supporting system being at stake at the expense of palm-oil lucrative deception*

Reshaping people's paradigm in such a context may certainly require simultaneous efforts and collaboration with multi-stakeholders on site; considering many interrelatedness and cross-cutting issues to deal with, as well as the existing over-arching power structures and the surrounding geopolitics.

The models applied should not only be based on the scheme of "What

they think," but also on "How they think about it," most especially over potentials that they locally possess. Along with such a changing paradigm, they would certainly come to various conclusions and initiatives to develop further in later stages.

### **Significant Elements in a Community Empowerment**

It is substantially imperative to instill and lay the foundation on which preliminary processes to be done as to exercise community empowerment, namely to do mainstreaming of the visions and missions, as well as community perception toward collective planning and actions. It is true that by means of conducting such a way that people can re-unite collective powers, and to revert old values that had ever existed hundreds of years before to the right path.

The approach applied should be a “people-centered” one, by putting people in every cycle of the processes involved, namely: deliberating, planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and it should come back again and again going in cyclical mode. Furthermore, by implanting such an approach, all processes directly involving will result in great impacts that will finally be the local ownership, even after some times when the implementing organization is not anymore doing things on site. To ensure things just happen the way it is required, the following things should be done on site, namely:

1. Awareness building efforts regarding various issues and aspects involving key stakeholders living within the village.
2. Transfer of knowledge, knowhow, skills and expertise that are required in accordance with the local needs and potentials through trainings, accompaniment, demonstration plots, and the development of community group discussions.
3. Reinforcing and strengthening the vision of local organization’s missions, including all institutions operating in within the village.
4. Improving the quality of local products in its various forms as to be effectively able to permeate wider markets.
5. Engaging and connecting any village-based economic group efforts to some some feasible source of fun capital sources.
6. Introducing the upstream and downstream of innovative business development model in accordance with locally available products.
7. Others.

### **An Open Path Towards Village Empowerment**

The adoption of Law NO. 6/2014 of Republic of Indonesia has provided a new path for villages to get self-empowered, in Indonesia. It is real momentum for a village to take care of and deal with its own destiny and necessary development to the very utmost. The said law has positioned a village as a genuine model of the smallest unit of government system, and to be equipped with supporting elements, more or less just like a governance system of a state; the legislature and the executives.

Such a great opportunity will be just in vain unless necessary endeavours and preparations to be done on site; an opportunity of a



*The baby palm-oil trees are grown in the middle of paddy-field with purpose someday they would replace the paddy. Despite the ignorance of local farmers, the shifting farming areas gradually degrades quality of life.*

democratic life of a smallest unit within the governing system in Indonesia.

Deployment of IDR 1 (one) billion down from the central government fund support is of an undeniable fact, and it is just right in front of the eyes. But, again and again, it is not

automatically deployed, as it really is, without proper requisites. It will predominantly depend on how adaptive a village can be, most especially in envisaging the available potentials and utilizing every bits of opportunity. Unless there is adequate preparation, even this best opportunity will turn to a utopia.

Nowadays, almost all village residents across Indonesia are confronted with diverse challenges, which are not simply easy. Village authorities/governments and their people have to work for the common causes with one shared vision and clear mission, most especially with regard to pursuing and

managing ways of action towards better program planning.

Therefore, it is most imperative for Pusaka Indonesia to escort and accompany those village residents in collaboration with village government, so that the open opportunity and the previously mentioned eminent path may be harnessed to the very utmost possible.

Various tangible measures may have to be done, which may include, but not limited to:

1. Transfer of knowledge in order to hone the vision of missions of the village government.
2. Training of Village Governance System.
3. Training of Village Information System.
4. Training of Village Governance Planning.
5. Training of Village Activity Reporting System.
6. Training of Village Financing and Expenditures Management.
7. Training of Governance Accountability System.
8. Training of Law Awareness Promotion
9. Others.



*Cucumbers are normally grown surrounding the houseyards. Helping farmers to market local products may lead to improving their economic life.*

Having such a level of clear preparedness and inceptions, a village administration setting will have a distinct characteristic; a self-sustaining village that is able to maximize the utilization of all possessed potentials, with which all the existing elements may proceed at full blast towards the same aspirations and goals.

Should this reality be realized so far, the first step shall have to be done now, from this place. Just like an old maxim pronounced by Laot T'se.

**“ A Journey of a thousand miles begins from a single step.”**

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