

**ICH 2019****International Conference on Humanities****COMMUNICATING SUSTAINABILITY IN COMMUNICATIVE CITY: PROBLEMS ON IMPLEMENTING SDGS IN INDONESIA**

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Sustainable Development Goals has been implementing in one way or another across the globe, especially in developing country like Indonesia. Although it has been around since 2016, its implementation is still stalling. The problems with the goals are not the main idea or why do we have to adopt it. Communicating goals is the first problem. This problem arises because of differences in understanding regarding the SDGs and the role of the agreement in development. The communicative city may emerge as an option offered to resolve the problem. This paper aims to illustrate why Communicative City Approach might be the tools needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, while also aim to explore what is important to focus on in implementing the approach. Method use focuses on a qualitative method while emphasizing on literature review, especially analysing SDGs reports published by organizations about the implementation of SDGs for the last years. Key findings are that SDGs also has its effort to localize the Goals and Targets as on to make it easier for the government to achieve the goals needed, although the effort may be further advanced by utilizing the communicative approach, especially considering the communicative principles in socializing SDGs to local level government. This research concludes that although on more empirical levels, the communicative approach may improve significance on our effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

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## 1. Introduction

Challenges in Urban Planning has been about tackling the problems in the city or region around the world that arise along with the needs and interests that come from various aspects in urban areas. It is also inseparable from the aspect of society as the user and the environment as the area of activity. The problems, however, range from minor aspects which have been tackled in the forms of theme cities (Davies, 2015) or a bigger picture, as in sustainability.

Sustainability has been a concern in urban planning since the 20th century and has been one of the ultimate goals in the planning process. As it is, urban planners endeavor to apply the principles of sustainability in their land use plans (Conroy, 2006). To tackle such concerns regarding sustainability, there is a lot of approaches that have been done, where one of them is the agreement of Sustainable Development Goals.

The agreement or the concept of the SDGs consists of 17 goals which covered 169 objectives to maintain the stability and sustainability of broad aspects in developing a country. Since Indonesia agreed to be involved, efforts to achieve the SDGs target are national development priorities, which require the synergy of planning policies at the national level and the provincial and district/city levels (The Ministry of National Development Planning Indonesia, 2017). Although it being a priority, the implementation itself is still in slower progress, as there is much to be done to implement it in the current development process.

### 1.1. Sustainable Development Goals

The SDGs are global common goals, meaning they need to be applied to every country to achieve it. The government on Local or regional level also plays an important role in defining and implementing SDGs (Global Taskforce, 2016). As universal as it is, the goals that have been listed in the agreement itself mainly common and in a general meaning, without the detailed specifications as to how and what to achieve. This has become a problem especially in a country that still adapting to the changes from the Millennial Development Goals, which happened to be the root of the currently known SDGs. The problem of adaptation itself put forth another problem, that is the lack of participation and the gap of the current agenda in various countries. Indonesia, in particular, had to adjust its current development programs to the sustainability program which refers to SDGs. The adaptation process maybe not a problem for a core nation development program, however, it spells disarray in the regional and local area.

The disarray and confusions lead to one main problem, which is the losing sense of belonging of the SDGs. The sense of belonging itself has an impact on whether the government in local and regional area cares to implement or adapt the goals in their core development program. Meanwhile, the information contained in the SDGs was too much and not all easy to understand (Hoelman, 2015). This has been the main confusion as to how and what to achieve, as the document regarding the goals and target itself not been translated and understood until 2017. Hoelman (2015) state that the SDGs can be understood in a variety of different dimensions; (i) the chronology and process; (ii) its goals and targets and in it the scale of the changes it dreams of; (iii) negotiation process; and (iv) differences compared to its predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

There is known that there's a different knowledge level that implied the concept of understanding SDGs itself. However, there has been an effort to solve the problem of different levels of knowledge from various stakeholders involved. One of the efforts itself is to encourage the success of SDGs in the regions by providing sufficient information to local governments (Hoelman, 2015).

The success of SDGs cannot be separated from the important role of local government. Because the city and district governments are: (a) closer to their citizens; (b) has authority and funds; (c) can make various innovations; and (d) spearheading public service providers and various government policies and programs (Hoelman, 2015). The local government is made as an important role in succeeding SDGs is driven by the fact that the decentralization in Indonesia makes, two-thirds of the fate and quality of life of citizens, in practice, is largely determined by the good and bad performance of local governments, ranging from environmental cleanliness, such as waste management, to the quality of schools and health services. We all depend on the high and low quality of public services in the area (Hoelman, 2015).

This is not only a symptom of Indonesia but also current at the world level. Referring to Benjamin Barber, in the book *If Mayors Ruled The World* (Barber, 2013), places hopes on the mayors at regional and local levels to tackle the world's major problems (climate change, terrorism prevention, poverty reduction, drug trade). The statements based on how they perceive the local governments as the power and energy of change.

On the other hand, however understandable it is, there is still underlying the core problem of why the SDGs itself is still not getting a smooth track of implementation, that is, to communicate it to all layers of stakeholders that involved. It has been stated that local governments play an important role in making the goals successful, however, the matter of communicating it to every layer is another problem to be solved.

## **1.2. Communicative City**

Sustainability cannot be justified as a 'business as usual' and that to define sustainability, people have to speak the same meaning and under the same page (Washington, 2015). There is a means of communication to achieve sustainability, whereas there should be a base value of how we started and how we make it happen. Thus, comes the communicative city.

Jeffres et al. (2007) defines the communicative city as the growth of a sense of belonging (SoB) of the urban citizens to the activity of getting involved in preparing, implementing, and controlling urban plan. It also defined as the view that sees communication patterns where people connects with the cities they lived in, where the relationships between communication and the urban context is valued, so the people who design, plan, and manages the city may identify that their activities have an impacts on the patterns of communication and that it may affect the society and city in turn.

The importance of communication in developing a Sustainable Development can be viewed from many levels and perspectives, one of them is from the stakeholder's relations perspective. One of the reasons that to communicate sustainability is the core problem to achieve sustainability is that despite there are more of people that involved as a professional in sustainability, there's still a need for specialists that trained in higher institutions to develop the research on the field properly (Leal Filho et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the existence of faulty networks, collaboration, and coordination between some institutions may prove a problem (Jäger, 2009). This has further recognized that in the Sustainable Development Goals document it stated that UN member states that adopt the SDGs document "will work closely with regional authorities and local governments"). This is a very clear marker of the important role of city and district governments in realizing SDGs throughout the world, as well as how to communicate it to the layer of stakeholders. However, the implementation of SDGs in cities and regions in Indonesia will face various challenges referring to how the decentralization and autonomy is the main idea of governing the nation, whereas the lack of communication patterns is the main problem of passing the idea from the centre of the city to periphery in other lands in the country. Therefore, it becomes a concern to see how close adapting the communicative city concept that helps to communicate people and the city plan with a concept of sustainability that became the basis of the Sustainable Development Goals.

## **2. Problem Statement**

A roadmap for localizing the SDGs has been done and published by a lot of organizations (Global Taskforce, 2016) that can be summed in 4 steps, where the first being the same for every other, that is to raise the awareness. The other steps were to advocate, implement, and to monitor.

The problem lies in how little the cities in the world know the sustainability problem and aware of the program and the reasons it has been forced to adapt. Indonesia especially, as Indonesia has been struggling in the fast-changing of the long-term goals of development moving from the Millenium Development Goals to Nawacita, 2014-2019s Indonesian President's Vision, to a much bigger scale of Sustainable Development Goals, and currently in a stuck of the trouble of implementing it.

The main problem lies in the vagueness of Goals and Target in Sustainable Development Goals. There is some target among the 169 that still (a) Open to interpretation, (b) Open to Implement, and (c) Not applicable/difference in culture development. As there is a means to adapt it, the problem still lies in how to spread awareness and make all of the countries moves toward the same goal.

## **3. Research Questions**

The discussion arises along with the question that pops about the implementation of the SDGs. Based on the research conducted in 2018, SDGs Centre in Indonesia concluded that the projected results on the readiness of Indonesia in implementing SDGs show that most SDGs targets – 23 out of 41 indicators used or about 56% indicators and targets- will not be achieved only with business-as-usual (BAU) efforts. It so happens that there are more challenges to be tackled to implement the SDGs and achieve the 17 goals stated in the agreement.

Therefore, the research question comes forth as to why the SDGs did not or is stalling to works in Indonesia, and how to sort it out, the following question is as below stated:

1. What are the cause of the problem and the core issue in implementing SDGs in Indonesia
2. How can the Communicative City concept makes it easier for adapting the SDGs

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to illustrate why the communicative city is worth to be a preferable choice in tackling the challenges that come with adopting the SDGs. To achieve this, there are goals to be pursued:

1. Identifying the core issue of the problem of implementing SDGs in Indonesia
2. Identifying Indonesia's effort to enhance the adaptation of SDGs
3. Formulating the communicative city approach and SDGs relationship.

#### **5. Research Methods**

This research approach focused on a qualitative method, which relies heavily on conducting a literature review, supported by relevant studies that have been published in a book or on an article of journals. Qualitative approach on the literature and information through content analysis (Bryman, 2012) was conducted on the UN SDGs, SDGs reports, Roadmaps, and other documents relating to means to achieve SDGs goals, to analyze the connections between the SDGs and to identify the key areas for the research needed.

The research is conducted with a review method, where the paper/reports reviewed are focused on reviewing SDGs report whether it from reports of SDGs implementation or about the effort to implement SDGs, and comparing it with the SDGs Goals and the communicative concept. The literature consists of reports of localizing SDGs in Indonesia, government reports on Indonesia's SDGs effort, reports of how well Indonesia's implementation on SDGs and more reports about the completion of SDGs across the nation. There is more than at least ten papers/reports that been used as a base, and across the literature, the main ideas are to find about: (a) Completion/achievement of SDGs in Indonesia; (b) Problems on implementation (focused on communication problem); (c) Main Issue of implementation and the effort need to be done (whether the issue stated explicitly or implicitly)

The analysis method used mainly utilizing the coding analysis to assess the problems or issue stated in reports/documents of SDGs into the categorized groups. The assessment, therefore, explained using the descriptive analysis to further emphasize the point of analysis.

#### **6. Findings**

There are issues to be reckoned as to answer the first part of the objective. Indonesia was ranked 99 out of all the countries that adopt SDGs with a total score of 62.8 in 2018, falling behind other South East Asia Countries in the SDGs Index and Dashboard Report (Alisjabana, 2018). Although, it cannot be said that falling behind in score is the reason why Indonesia is struggling to achieve the ideal goals of sustainability. Research conducted in Indonesia that focus on the Readiness of Regional and Local Area in Indonesia to implement SDGs in 2018 concluded that Indonesia still has a long way to go to adopt SDGs as its basis of Development. With all the Indicators measured, the majority of the grade was 'E', meaning that Indonesia 'still far enough to reach the SDGs target: Business-as-usual assumptions, the projected results show that in 2030 the indicator is still less than 50% of the SDGs target'.

In its implementation, some agreed principles have been adopted by Indonesia. The first principle is universality, which encourages the application of SDGs in all countries. In the national context, the implementation of SDGs will be applied in all regions of Indonesia. The second principle is integration. This principle implies that SDGs are implemented in an integrated and interrelated manner in all social, economic and environmental dimensions. This second principle has been adhered to in the preparation of action plans, especially related to the preparation of programs and activities and their budgeting. The final principle is "No One Left Behind" which ensures that the implementation of SDGs must benefit all, especially the vulnerable and their implementation involves all stakeholders.

The aforementioned principle has also been applied in every stage/process of implementing SDGs in Indonesia (Central Bureau of Statistics Indonesia, 2016). This principle fits well with how communicative city approach tries to focus our attention on the communication patterns (Jeffres, 2010) that connect people in cities, further, make the SDGs universal and adaptable throughout the country, integrating connection between people and planning process, and including all aspects and level of communities so no one left behind between its process. This principle will be presented as to answer the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> goal of the paper in following section in 6.1 and 6.2 correspondingly.

### **6.1. Communicating Sustainable Development Goals**

There are three challenges to be faced in implementing SDGs, namely communication strategies, financing, and preparing regions to adopt and implement SDGs in each district/city (INFID, 2018). Efforts to achieve SDGs targets are a priority for national development, which requires the synergy of planning policies at the national level and the provincial and district/city levels. The Ministry of National Development Planning (2019) in Socialization of SDGs Roadmap for Localization stated that as many as 94 out of 241 indicators in SDGs are already aligned with targets in RPJMN (Long-term National Development Plan) and has been existed as a part of the roadmap. The roadmap may be used to further localize the SDGs, which triggered local or regional governments to implement the Agenda at the local levels, while also supporting them and other stakeholders in turn (Global Taskforce, 2016). This further supported by Indonesia President's decree (Indonesia President Decree, 2017) that stated the roadmap includes Involving all parties (government, parliament, mass organizations & media, philanthropy & business, experts & academics) to work together under the roles, functions, and abilities of the parties. However, there is one flaw yet to be covered, that is to communicate the SDGs, to the so-called levels of stakeholders and community, which then covered with the communicative city approach.

The main issue of communicating SDGs in Indonesia is a matter of definition. In the SDGs, all 17 goals and 169 targets were made as universal as possible. However, the roadmap cannot be one-size-fits-all. INFID (2018) stated that "the issue of data and concept or definition has not yet been resolved in Indonesia". For example, there is never a clear understanding of whether adequate means equality or sufficient. The concept will relate to data and information. Different concepts will produce different data. In fact, at present every national agency have different understanding on data and how to pursue SDGs in Indonesia. The Ministry of National Development Planning in Indonesia, however, has taken action to solve the matter of defining. In 2017, a document titled 'Standard Translation of SDGs Global Goals and Targets' has published by the Ministry, further solving one issue in implementing.

Indonesia National government took consideration of localizing the SDGs and published the Guidelines of Preparation of Action Plans in Implementing SDGs back in 2017, which consist of organization, job description, work mechanism, and technical steps for local governments in implementing SDGs. However, the matter of how to deliver and foster the participation of local government needs to be further emphasized. Thus, come the needs of what approach is suitable for communicating the goals. Based on the structures compromised by Drucker and Gumpert (Drucker & Gumpert, 2016), the goals can be segregated by five-category or structures that may directly (or indirectly) connects to the communicative nature of the society in the city: 1) Physical structure; 2) Infrastructure or the facilities and service that connected; 3) Social structures and the patterns or arrangement that aims to connect individuals; 4) Regulatory structure used to govern the city and societies; 5) Fictional and nonfictional portray of the structure of the imagination of the pattern.

The structures serve as a tool of audit that becomes the basis as to how can it (SDGs goals) be communicated through the structures. The assessment is done by assessing the indicator by each goal to the covered aspect or indicated aspect to be assessed in the target and indicator based on the indicator assessment in Indonesia. Referring to table 01, it can be said that the SDGs goals heavily rely on Physical, Infrastructure, and Social structures which becomes the main valued indicator as those structures can be valued with quantitative data. Table 01 may serve as a basis on how to communicate and what interests must be put forward in communicating the goals to localize the SDGs.

**Table 01.** Assessment of Goals Indicator on Communicative Structures Approach

Goals	Communicative Structures				
	Physical Structure	Infra-structure	Social Structure	Regulatory Structure	Depictions of Structure
Goal 1: No Poverty	√		√	√	√
Goal 2: Zero Hunger			√		√
Goal 3: Good Health and Well Being		√	√		
Goal4: Quality Education		√	√		
Goal 5: Gender Equality	√	√			
Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	√	√			
Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	√	√		√	
Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	√	√	√		√
Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure		√			√
Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities			√	√	
Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	√	√	√		√
Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	√			√	
Goal 13: Climate Action	√			√	
Goal 14: Life Below Water	√				
Goal 15: Life on Land	√				
Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions			√	√	√
Goal 17: Partnership for the Goals			√		√

Source: Results of Analysis, 2019.

## 6.2. Communicative Approach for Sustainable Development Goals

Communicative Approach has been used mainly on achieving a state where stakeholders, people, and cities are coordinated and striving the same goals. In the case of SDGs in Indonesia, the problem of communication arises as to the sectoral ego of the different government sectors. INFID (Hoelman, 2015) states that in Indonesia, the sectoral ego is also thick in funding and planning issues such as on SDGs. The Ministry of Finance in Indonesia acknowledges many institutes consider their institutions to be the most important and difficult to implement integrated targets. For example, the Ministry of Forestry does not talk about reducing poverty, even though the relationship is very close. This further becomes the basis that proper communication patterns, which aims to involve all parties in the planning and involvement of the implementation of goals, must be carried out by prioritizing common interests, perhaps achieved with a communication approach.

Jeffres (2010) in his paper *Communicative City* stated that the communicative city approach has 5 goals. The first one is that the communication patterns that exist in society and the policies that encourage would foster community attachment. Second, communication aims to connect people in society with a background that's different where conflict may often happen as the case and that people interact most often with those who have more similarities as them. Third, the communication approach, policies, and patterns should be focused on helping the marginalized and disadvantaged people in the community. Fourth, communication patterns need to stimulate and support activity in the economic aspect of the city. Fifth, the system of communication has to support culture in the city, whether it be artists or organizations in the communities. Sixth, communication patterns should have introduced the new people and generations in the scope of community with its history and traditions. INFID (2018), also state that there are three models of a multi-stakeholder partnership model in Indonesia that can be a solution to problems and accelerate the implementation of SDGs at the central and regional levels, namely: (a) Information/Knowledge; (b) Implementation; (c) Standardization.

The existing literature of communication that explains the relations between organizations and media to an urban area is still always prone to generalization (Jeffres, 2010). In Indonesia, the means to achieve SDGs have been stated in the document of *Guidelines of Localization of SDGs Action Plan* as well as *SDGs Roadmap*. Both documents covered the same principle, that there are four steps to achieve localized SDGs: 1). Raising Awareness; 2). Advocacy; 3). Implementation; and 4). Evaluation/Monitoring. These four principles further emphasized that there are steps are to be taken to achieve localized SDGs, using any approach applicable, thus proposing a communicative approach.

Throughout the process, collectively, the produced information defined by the stakeholders may directly or indirectly be affected by the outcome of the process (Innes, 1998). By means, the stakeholders involved are presented by the definition of a problem and to solve it or think of a solution altogether. (Healey, 1997).

From the previous analysis, we conclude that information and the distribution of information plays a big role in achieving SDGs, and to arrive at the same basis of understanding of importance on SDGs is the basic means of consensus. Therefore, comes the role of the *Communicative Approach*, which becomes the tool to mediate and accommodate consensus.



The communicative Approach provides 6 pillars as a means to communicate or mediate to aid consensus-building efforts. Openness and trust are the most crucial aspects of building an agreement (Healey, 1997). Second, to state the objectives, underlying assumptions (Chakraborty, 2012) as it will be served as the main goals so the consensus got the fixed corridor to work on. Third, it is to assume every stakeholder involved in each position it takes to consensus building. Fourth, is to make the stakeholders involved to define the information and identify it by themselves, where it might help reducing biases that may happen by doing and analyzing things by only one discussion (Chakraborty, 2012). Fifth, as well as bring to the forefront any conflicts between the underlying values of the stakeholders (Chakraborty, 2012). And last, is to consider the commonalities between each region and stakeholders. After considering and acknowledge the aforesaid information, commonalities and the same values from different stakeholders may arise, then makes it easier to build the same understanding of the problems.

**Table 02.** Communicative Principles Contributions Assessment on Localizing SDGs

Communicative Principles	Localizing SDGs Roadmap Pillars			
	Awareness	Advocacy	Implementation	Evaluation/ Monitoring
Openness and Trust Building	√	√	√	√
Underlying Objectives	√	√	√	
Stakeholders Position		√	√	
Identifying Information	√			√
Conflict Confrontation	√	√	√	
Commonalities			√	

Source: Results of Analysis, 2019

Communicative Approaches on Localizing SDGs in Indonesia must be seen as how the principles of the communicative approach help or support the steps on localizing SDGs. Based on assessment done on table 02, Openness and Trust building may serve as a basis on how the regional government relies on the Central government and vice versa to rule their autonomy to implement the goals as the basis of the development in each own area. It also serves as a means of monitoring each own achievement in striving for the SDGs. Underlying objectives become the main core of raising awareness, as to how the objectives need to be stated as one whole goal to be achieved and are in importance in Indonesia, not only as a means of following the trends. The other principle also served it means to help further the steps of localizing SDGs in Indonesia as it may help in communicating the goals for a better implementation, given that the communication problem is taken on.

## 7. Conclusion

The research, using assessment done before explained that the main problem of implementing SDGs in Indonesia is mainly on understanding how to achieve the indicators of SDGs targets. It is further known that the SDGs are easier to achieve more when the structure of the physical, structural, and social structure involved. Therefore, explains why the goals in Indonesia are focused on accomplishing goals that have certain clear indicators, especially the one that relies on development.

Furthermore, the assessment also explains that the communicative approach may be used to answer the main issue of understanding the SDGs in Indonesia. Indonesia needs to focus on how to be more open and build trust in regional and local level on achieving SDGs, underlying the same objectives as to make one big objective to achieve; differs from SDGs but still ultimately strive to achieve SDGs, and avoid conflict especially on the different level of governance.

Communicative Approach may serve as a mediator of the plan to achieve the goals. Media usage also may serve as a tool to achieve the goals of localizing the SDGs. There is research on the setting of an agenda that shows an explanation of how the media shapes the perception of the public by emphasizing what is important by giving limelight on some problems and throwing others. People on the political background has been long learned that they could manipulate the media to put aside a major problem by making the public rank the problem lower than the agenda they propose (Tan & Weaver, 2009). This approach can be used to emphasize the importance of SDGs by reversing the action to pace the development of the SDGs, Figure 01 may conceptualize the said concerns. Other tools of communication also may be used to convey the objectives of the SDGs in the context of localizing the Sustainability. This further emphasized by expressing hope or wishes of the communication technologies that may help people define and shape urban and public spaces, creating a place for communication to occur.



**Figure 01.** Communicative City Approach Diagram

Source: Improvement of Repositioning Concept of Communicative City and Urban Development Scenarios (Sutriadi, 2016)

Indonesia still has many challenges to overcome in its efforts to implement SDGs as a basis for development. Although various efforts in paving the way to reach the SDGs have been pursued, there are still missing links that linger. Communicative Approach is needed to communicate and mediate the means and emphasized consensus on how Indonesia should take on the SDGs at regional and local levels. It also can be used to further define the goals and which structures of communication in the city can be applied to pave the road of localizing and implementing SDGs in Indonesia.

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