

Empathy in Action: Forms of Empathetic Behavior in the Community's Implementation of the Gerak Bareng Social Program

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Abstract. The ever-changing and complex dynamics of societal life give rise to various forms of social issues. One of the common consequences is the loss of empathy, leading individuals to harm or even take the lives of others. This highlights the need to foster empathy in a society constantly facing diverse challenges. One way to achieve this is through civic engagement in social programs implemented by social organizations. Such involvement can reveal various forms of empathetic behavior expressed by the community during the implementation of these programs. This study aims to provide an overview of the forms of empathy behavior reflected in the community through the social program of the Gerak Bareng organization. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. The results showed that the forms of empathic behavior that are manifested in the community through citizen involvement in Gerak Bareng's social programs include compassion, giving and sharing, and cooperation. The role of Gerak Bareng in fostering community empathy is demonstrated through civic engagement in Gerak Bareng's social programs with the formation of empathetic behaviors within the community such as compassion, mutual giving, sharing, and collaboration.

Keywords: *Empathy; Social Programs; Civic Engagement; Citizenship Education*

INTRODUCTION

The failure to empathize leads to the deterioration of social life, which continues to escalate. The breakdown of social relationships results in various social problems, a consequence that arises when people lack empathy, making it easier for them to harm or even take the lives of others due to the loss of their ability to empathize (Santosi, 2009; Gusmadi, 2018a).

According to the report from the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB), a total of 1,891 natural disasters occurred in Indonesia throughout 2021. These disasters caused 6,049,649 people to suffer and

be displaced, 12,892 injuries, 511 fatalities, and 70 people missing (in Jayani, 2021).It is the responsibility of every citizen to help one another and work together in facing natural disasters, especially since Indonesia is known for its value of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation). A high level of empathy among citizens can encourage social actions within the community Asih & Pratiwi, (2010); Wibowo, (2012); Oktaviani, (2017); Tsaani, (2018); Nurkholis, (2021); Wibowo & Gunawan, (2022) It is stated that "there is a positive relationship between empathy and prosocial behavior: the higher a person's empathy, the higher their prosocial behavior.

Conversely, the lower a person's empathy, the lower their prosocial behavior”.

The Head of the UGM Center for Cultural Studies, Salam (2013), stated that “various forms of violence and conflict that occur in Indonesia are the result of the lack of a culture of empathy in Indonesian society”. This can be seen from the increasing conditions of humanitarian problems in Indonesia in LBH APIK's records regarding cases of gender-based violence (CNN Indonesia, 2021). LBH APIK public lawyer Pangaribuan explained that in 2020 there were 1,178 cases entered and handled by LBH APIK. This number is much greater than in 2018, namely 837 cases and in 2019, namely 794 cases. The details of these cases are as follows:

LBH APIK 2020 Case

No	Case	Number of Cases
1	Online gender-based violence, including the threat of distribution	112
2	Illegal content	66
3	Attempts to trick the victim	33
4	Online harassment	47
5	Defamation	15
6	Privacy breach	2
7	Online stalking	17
8	Fudging	1

The functioning of the wheel of social life heavily depends on the empathy within each individual. A lack or loss of empathy leads to the breakdown of social life. Howe, (2015:131) It is explained that "the loss of empathy can lead to various behavioral and emotional problems as well as the

deterioration of social relationships." Furthermore Decety & Ickes, (2009:87) It is stated that "greater understanding and a sense of sharing with others will result in less prejudice, fewer conflicts, and a foundation for more positive social life." The issue arises when Humanity will continue and endure only if empathy is cultivated in social interactions. Without empathy, the foundation of human connections weakens, threatening the continuity of a harmonious society.

Based on the research conducted by Hanifah, Raharjo & Riana, (2019); Muhtar et al., (2019) It is stated that nonprofit organizations facilitate communities to respond to social issues by carrying out humanitarian actions. The existence of social organizations plays a crucial role in shaping the empathetic behavior of the community, particularly in responding to social problems occurring within society, through involvement in the implementation of the organization's social programs.

This prosocial behavior is a form of empathy. As stated in the research Brazil et al., (2023: 75) One form of empathy is cognitive empathy, which is uniquely and positively related to prosocial behavior (as opposed to antisocial behavior). Hanifah et al.'s research highlights the importance of empathy in fundraising. By understanding the emotions and empathy of donors, nonprofit organizations can increase trust and gain more support. Meanwhile, Brazil et al.'s research

offers an understanding of various forms of empathy. Hanifah et al.'s study is limited to empathy with donors, while Brazil et al.'s research is limited to the relationship between empathy and prosocial behavior. Therefore, to address these limitations, further research is needed on the forms of empathetic behavior in society, particularly in relation to citizens' involvement in humanitarian social programs. This study provides a new approach by examining the forms of empathetic behavior in greater depth through a case study methodology.

As social beings, humans rely on one another. In times of distress, people need to support each other, embrace rather than strike, offer help and encouragement, share, and cooperate in order to overcome the social issues that arise, all while fostering a sense of closeness and kinship. There is a need for public awareness to actively participate in realizing the acceleration of development in Indonesia. As Rukmana stated (in Surotinojo, 2009: 21) It is expressed that "one of the components that need to be included in development activities is community participation.

Building empathy within the community can be achieved by implementing social programs. These programs are carried out by organizations and social communities. Winardi, (2003) It is stated that "social organizations are institutions that meet the social needs of others in order to establish

relationships with others." Essentially, to achieve development and transform unfavorable conditions into relatively better ones, collaboration between the government and society is always necessary. In this context, the government plays a larger role in facilitating, while society must make efforts to engage by participating in social affairs so that the success of development activities can be achieved. As mentioned Gunawan, (2022; Razak et al., (2023) It is emphasized that "the success of social programs is largely determined by the involvement of citizens." Civic engagement can be fostered through education, particularly through Citizenship Education. This is in line with the research conducted by Karliani, (2017) It emphasizes that "Indonesian citizenship can be built through civic engagement, which can be transformed, among other ways, through Citizenship Education.

It is crucial to build empathy within society, as empathy can improve social relationships. As stated Davis, (1990) It is stated that "one aspect of empathy is empathic concern, where a person shows care and concern for others in their surrounding environment." This sense of care can be cultivated, among other ways, through social organizations. *Gerak Bareng* is a humanitarian social organization that serves the community by providing empowerment programs, services, as well as mitigation and responses to social conditions occurring within society.

Budi Juliardi's research in 2015 in his journal entitled "Implementation of Character Education Through Citizenship Education". The study used a literature review method on character education. Juliardi emphasized that various conflicts of today's young generation show moral degradation as a sign that the generation has easily lost good character in itself. One of Juliardi's emphases is the cultivation of morals and social skills for the younger generation so that in the future they have the capability to understand and solve concrete citizenship problems, such as empathy, tolerance, upholding diversity and local wisdom, differences of opinion, and other social skills. Juliardi in the study focused more on character in general, while empathy was only studied a little. The difference between the research developed by the researcher and Juliardi is that the empathy aspect is presented in more depth from the role of social organizations.

Nurtiani Manik in her thesis on the relationship between empathy and prosocial behavior in 2018. The results of her research show that there is a positive and significant relationship between empathy and prosocial behavior. The differences between Manik's study of empathy and that of the researchers in this study include several aspects, including the realm of the environment and the role of institutions. Manik examined empathy in schools, so his research subjects only focused on students. While in this study, empathy is

studied in a broader context, namely in the role of social organizations in building community empathy. Of course, the community in question also includes students.

Empathy is essential in developing an understanding of others and for fostering better communication, cooperation, and stronger relationships within society. Empathy is essential in developing an understanding of others and for determining the best actions to take in addressing real-world situations (Held, 2005; Slote, 2008; Azis, Komalasari & Masyitoh, 2020). The decline and loss of empathy are signs of the erosion of moral values in society, marked by the increasing frequency of social conflicts and the rise of individualistic tendencies among people, which leads to the breakdown of social relationships. Such a situation certainly requires alternative solutions that involve all components of society. Gerak Bareng as a social organization with its humanitarian programs, embodies a form of empathetic behavior, demonstrating how citizens engage in a sense of care, both for others and for their surrounding environment.

This research is intended to be able to collect, study and explore in depth, and compile information related to the Gerak Bareng organization with its social programs in providing development for the science of civic engagement and empathy. This research can contribute to the concept of civic engagement and citizen empathy by

developing awareness and concern for others and the environment.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative research paradigm with a case study approach as its methodology (Sugiyono, 2013, 2014, 2020; Creswell, 2017). The informants in this study are the management of the *Gerak Bareng* organization, volunteers, and donors. The researcher as a human instrument uses considerations about the selection of informants based on the consideration that the informants have experience regarding the implementation of social programs of the *Gerak Bareng* organization and participate directly in the event. The informants are the *Gerak Bareng* organization management, volunteers and donors.

Research Informants

No	Informant	Reason for Selection
1	Gerak Bareng Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to be an informant. • Is an administrator of the <i>Gerak Bareng</i> organization. • Active in social program activities for 6 years.
2	Volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to be an informant. • Is permanent residents in the village. • Still and have received assistance from the <i>Gerak Bareng</i> organization. • Active as a volunteer who is ready to help build the village.
3	Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to be an informant.

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- Is a regular donor to support the *Gerak Bareng* organization.
 - Active in controlling *Gerak Bareng's* social program activities.
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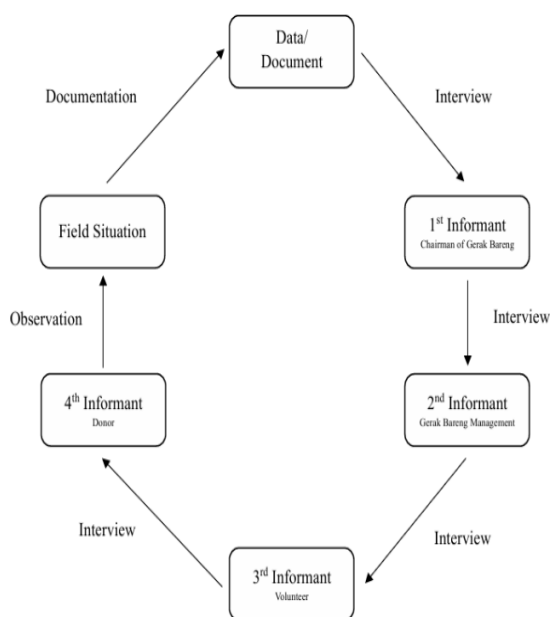
The research location is in Jakarta, specifically in Sukabumi Selatan, located at Jalan KPBD No. 33 RT 09 RW 01, Kelurahan Sukabumi Selatan, Kecamatan Kebon Jeruk, West Jakarta. In data collection, the researcher used: (1) primary data, which was obtained through interviews with the founder and management of the *Gerak Bareng* organization, local residents, donors, government officials, and community leaders; (2) secondary data, which was collected through the researcher's observations related to the focus of the study and the results of documentation of the activities of the *Gerak Bareng* organization..

Data collection in this study used techniques such as interviews, observation, and documentation (Arikunto, 2014). In this research, interview techniques are used to explore deeper truths which are the core of naturalistic inquiry. In-depth interviews with informants aim to explore more detailed information from informants regarding empathy building through the *Gerak Bareng* organization. The use of observation techniques in this study was carried out in two ways, namely by participating, which means that the researcher is part of what he is researching, and by non-participation, which means that the researcher only observes the

activities that occur without participating. The documentation technique carried out by researchers in the form of data collection comes from archives or documents belonging to the Gerak Bareng organization. The researcher suffices documentation data for taking photos of activities, written works or art related to the data needed in the Gerak Bareng organization.

The validity of the data is ensured through triangulation techniques. The triangulation used includes source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation is carried out by cross-checking the data obtained from several informants. Technique triangulation involves verifying the data from the same source using different data collection techniques. For more details, the triangulation design in this study is presented in the form of the following figure.

Source and Method Triangulation Combination Design Model



RESULT

After conducting the research, it was found that the forms of empathetic behavior in society include:

Affection

RY, in his interview, stated that the reason for helping and assisting others is a calling, a passion. When someone dedicates themselves to the social world, they must be at peace with themselves, no longer thinking about their own needs. The focus should be on others, on society at large. The thought is that there are people who are in greater need than oneself, which helps in training and fostering empathy. It cultivates a sense of gratitude and sharpens empathy within oneself.

YR, in his interview, explained that in maintaining relationships with both donors and volunteers in running the programs of the Gerak Bareng organization, they build empathy and trust by providing services and reports, especially to donors.

MP, a volunteer for Gerak Bareng, shared the reasons for his involvement in the organization's program activities, specifically in the response and mitigation program for the fire disaster in the Pasar Gembrong community that occurred before Idul Fitri. MP continued that as a volunteer, he felt a humanitarian calling within himself. By becoming a volunteer, he has learned many things in the field, from social organizations and the Fire Department (Damkar) who have

been involved in humanitarian efforts for a longer time, as well as sharing knowledge with others.

Giving and sharing

RY mentioned that the involvement of the community depends on the social programs implemented by Gerak Bareng. In the mitigation & response program for the Pasar Gembrong community, those involved in providing living support packages included donors who contributed funds, as well as donors who provided goods needed by Gerak Bareng for the living support packages to be distributed to the victims of the Pasar Gembrong fire. In addition to donors, there were also volunteers from the community. Joining Gerak Bareng can be a place to learn, as there are many training sessions to attend and valuable knowledge to gain from volunteers who have long been involved in humanitarian social organizations.

YR explained that before joining Gerak Bareng, YR had been an independent volunteer, traveling alone to remote areas to provide aid on his own. Initially, the intention was to learn how to be a good volunteer. At first, it was out of sympathy, but over time, YR learned that there are ethics and rules to follow when helping others, and one should not help haphazardly. With experience in the field, YR learned that some people take advantage of others, while some are truly in need. This experience became a valuable lesson.

MP, an active volunteer in Gerak Bareng, sees the organization as a field of good deeds. There is an opportunity for charity and to engage in acts of worship through Gerak Bareng's humanitarian mission. This perspective allows MP to understand that behind every disaster, there is wisdom to be found.

Cooperation

RY explained that in carrying out the programs of Gerak Bareng, there are several categories of donors, namely: (1) retail/individual donors, who are the largest group of donors in Gerak Bareng, with approximately 5,000 individuals currently registered; (2) partners, with active partnerships currently including organizations like KKB BNI, PERINDO, and Korean fanbases such as EXO, NCT, and others, with a total of about 20 active partnerships; and (3) CSR/corporate donors, with only 1-2 companies currently participating. In addition to donors and beneficiaries, there are other important stakeholders, including local authorities such as RT (Neighborhood Associations), RW (Community Associations), and the village head (lurah), who play a crucial role in coordinating and collaborating with *Gerak Bareng* to ensure smooth operations during the implementation of the organization's programs.

YR mentioned that many community members were involved during the

implementation of Gerak Bareng's programs. For example, during the living support package assistance program, the involvement was reflected in the cooperation among the community, starting with the transportation of the living support packages, which was assisted by organizations such as Pondok Sedekah and Sedekah Nusantara, as well as volunteers and BPBD (Regional Disaster Management Agency) who also participated.

MP explained that Gerak Bareng's programs are carried out collaboratively and through mutual cooperation. For example, in responding to a fire incident, Gerak Bareng works together with the members of its volunteer team, as well as with the volunteer teams from other organizations, including cooperation with the Fire Department (Damkar), BPBD (Regional Disaster Management Agency), and other humanitarian social organizations.

Forms of Community Empathy Behavior

No	Forms of Empathy	Community Behavior
1	Compassion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisting people to their seats safely at Pasar Berkah activity. Giving full attention to children and parents (companions) at Khitanan Massal activity. Chatting casually and helping to prepare meals and drinks at Living Support activity.
2	Giving and Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2000 subsidized groceries in the form of rice, sugar, oil and eggs for 500 households at Pasar Berkah activity.

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- 40 child circumcision quotas with prizes of 40 roasted chickens, 40 snacks and 40 Quranic kits at Khitanan Massal activity.
 - 250 packages for 250 families in the form of worship equipment, eating utensils, toiletries and basic necessities at Living Support activity.
- 3 Collaboration
- Community members, volunteers, donors, and Gerak Bareng administrators work together from the beginning to the end of the Pasar Berkah activity.
 - Community members, volunteers and Gerak Bareng administrators work together from the beginning to the end of the Khitanan Massal activity.
 - Community members, volunteers, donors, and Gerak Bareng administrators work together from start to finish of Living Support activity.
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DISCUSSION

The forms of empathetic behavior within society are reflected in affection, giving and sharing, as well as cooperation. Affection is shown through helping others, giving full attention, and adjusting oneself when in a new environment without feeling uncomfortable. Giving and sharing are demonstrated through community involvement in various programs social activities of Gerak Bareng, both as donors and volunteers, such as involvement in the *Pasar Berkah* activity by providing 2000

subsidized basic food packages, *Khitanan Massal* by offering 40 circumcision quotas for children, and the distribution of 250 living support packages to those affected by disasters. Cooperation is consistently demonstrated in carrying out the social programs of *Gerak Bareng*, and this cooperation is extended to all parties involved in the *Gerak Bareng* programs, whether between the organization's administrators, volunteers, donors, local authorities, or other organizations.

The four forms of empathy behaviors align with the opinion of Covey (Morrow-Howell *et al.*, 2014; Howe, 2015) that 'humans who love each other, share with each other, give to each other, and cooperate with each other are signs that empathy exists'. The community's involvement in the implementation of humanitarian social programs is a form of participation carried out with sincerity to help those in need. This is referred to as civic engagement, as stated by Gusmadi, (2018) explains that 'civic engagement emphasizes voluntary participation in the surrounding community, either individually or in groups'.

The Pasar Berkah program by *Gerak Bareng* is carried out by subsidizing basic necessities, aiming to help and ease the financial burden on the community. This aligns with the statement of Noor (2011:87) regarding community empowerment that "community empowerment is the idea of

economic development that summarizes the values within the community to build a new paradigm for development that is centered on the community." In this context, *Pasar Berkah* is one of *Gerak Bareng's* efforts to realize community empowerment.

Civic engagement is crucial in determining the success of empowerment programs. The involvement of the community, whether as volunteers, donors, or organizational staff, through active participation in improving social conditions, is a tangible manifestation of civic engagement. This aligns with the statement of Adler & Goggin, (2005) "civic engagement refers to the ways in which citizens participate in community life to improve the conditions of others or help shape the future of society." Citizen involvement is the implementation of democratic values, demonstrated through participation in social organizations as a form of service to the community and the surrounding environment. As stated by Lenzi *et al.*, (2012) "youth involvement is a democratic practice in the form of participation in community groups and socio-political engagement, which serves as a manifestation of service to the community and the surrounding environment".

The practice of democracy through the empowerment programs of the *Gerak Bareng* organization, which involves active participation from citizens, is a manifestation of democratic education within the

community. When discussing democracy, it is closely related to Civic Education, as the essence of democratic education itself is Civic Education (Winataputra, 2001, 2012; Adnan, 2005; Nasution, 2009, 2016; Winataputra & Budimansyah, 2012; Bestari & Ediyono, 2017) that "Civic Education serves as the foundation for building broader democratic education and plays a crucial role in shaping democratic citizens".

Gerak Bareng, which promotes empowerment programs, aims to foster community independence and elevate the lower class to at least the middle class with sufficient income, thereby reducing unemployment through entrepreneurship. This aligns with what has been stated by Nizar, (2015) that "the middle class creates entrepreneurship with job opportunities and productivity growth in society".

Gerak Bareng, in carrying out its service programs, identifies the social problems that are occurring right before its eyes. and provides quick solutions by engaging the empathy of the community to participate in helping those in need. This is in line with the definition of public service according to Prastowo. (In Supriatiningsih, Safudin & Yulianto, 2019) explained that "public service is an activity proposed by an organization or individual towards those being served, with intangible qualities that cannot be owned." The mass circumcision program is one of the consistent public service programs carried out

by the *Gerak Bareng* organization. The form of empathy, wrapped in love, fosters cooperation in helping to solve the problems occurring within the community, resulting in prosocial behavior. As stated by Astuti, (2014) explained that "a person with high empathy will exhibit prosocial behavior in their daily life, such as sharing, cooperating, and sincerely helping others".

Prosocial behavior can develop when citizens have a strong sense of empathy within themselves. This is in line with the statement of Solekhah, (2018) that "empathy can influence individuals to engage in prosocial behavior." Through the community service programs, civic engagement in the Mass Circumcision event by *Gerak Bareng* is evident in the enthusiasm of the community to participate as volunteers, donors, and event organizers, which contributed to the successful completion of the program.

The character of empathy encourages citizens to engage in prosocial behavior, leading to a better social life and eliminating individualistic tendencies." In terms of the character of citizens, it is certainly related to Civic Education. This aligns with Juliardi, (2015) explanation that "Civic Education is education about national and citizenship issues, which in its implementation applies democratic and humanistic principles. Therefore, issues related to the nation and citizens, particularly concerning character, are problems addressed by Civic Education.

Gerak Bareng focuses more on issues related to disaster response. The form of response carried out by Gerak Bareng involves drawing the empathy of the community to participate in disaster assistance, both as donors and volunteers. Civic engagement is fostered through community participation in mitigation and response programs, demonstrated through concrete actions to achieve the common good. The ideas of civic engagement and Civic Education are closely linked to one another. This aligns with the presentation of Indonesian citizenship development provided by Karliani, (2017) is: One of the signs of the diminishing value of Indonesian citizenship can be seen in the lack of concern for the surrounding conditions. This, of course, can alter life values and the wisdom of Indonesian culture, such as mutual cooperation, friendliness, tolerance, helping each other, and loyalty. It is very contrasting to see the current reality where the value of mutual cooperation has shifted to individualistic values that prioritize personal interests over the common good. Therefore, efforts to build Indonesian citizenship can be pursued through civic engagement, which can be transformed through Citizenship Education.

The mitigation and response programs have already been realized in Indonesia and Asia, proving that Gerak Bareng's organization acts with sincerity in addressing social issues. By building empathy within the community, they encourage active

involvement in the social programs being implemented. The development of empathy as a character trait within citizens fosters prosocial behavior. This is in line with what was stated by Zuchdi, (2003); Keen, (2007) The traits and personality that influence prosocial behavior are empathy." A person who has the ability to empathize is able to cooperate well because of their habit of engaging in prosocial behavior. Even Covey (in Hendriyanto, 2018) "One of the habits of being an effective person is to synergize, which means humans need to collaborate well and kindly to achieve positive outcomes'.

Awareness of social situations drives community participation to establish and join humanitarian social organizations, with the hope of providing services needed by society. In this context, all tangible actions with responsibility embody the essence of civic engagement. As stated by Maryland (in Jacoby & Associates, 2009) that: Civic engagement is an action driven by a strong sense of responsibility toward a community. It encompasses various activities aimed at fostering citizens' awareness, participation in community development, and ideas about global citizenship and interdependence.

Empathy is an essential character to cultivate, as it fosters civic engagement, one of which is through the role of social organizations in humanitarian activities outlined in social programs. A collective effort to address social issues in the surrounding

environment without overly relying on government intervention is referred to as a social movement. As stated by Hardianto, (2020; Chamisijatn et al.,(2022) stating that 'a social movement is when individuals or groups in society begin to recognize their own and their group's needs, no longer merely waiting for and depending on the government in various matters.' Social movements can be sustained if the community establishes social organizations, thereby creating a clear organizational structure to achieve the vision and mission of the organization. This aligns with the opinion of Reksohadiprodjo, (2000) about the various attributes present in an organization, which are as follows:

- 1) An organization is a social institution consisting of a group of people with established patterns of interaction.
- 2) An organization exists to achieve a specific goal.
- 3) The organization is consciously coordinated and structured.
- 4) An organization is a social instrument with identifiable boundaries, and its existence is based on a relatively permanent foundation.

The role of the Gerak Bareng organization in building community empathy becomes part of Civic Education in society. Empathy drives social movements within the community by forming organizations that realize the achievement of knowledge, attitudes, and skills of good citizens. As stated Huri & Munajat, (2016) stating that 'one

element in the Civic Education system is the social and cultural citizenship movement, which aims at the development of civic knowledge, values, civic attitudes, and citizenship skills”.

Gerak Bareng falls into the category of an organization based on its objectives because it has a vision to become a professional and transparent humanitarian social organization. This means that Gerak Bareng was established to achieve specific goals. As stated by Satari (in Laodengkowe, 2010) Stating that one of the three types of organizations based on their classification is 'an organization based on its objectives, meaning that each organization is established to achieve goals based on specific interests, which can be formulated to meet the needs, desires, and targets of its members.' Gerak Bareng is part of a community organization (Ormas) that serves to provide services to the community or society. As stated by Salomon (in Laodengkowe, 2010) "Explaining that 'one classification of community organizations (Ormas) is those that operate in the field of social services, based on key characteristics of Ormas, namely: organizational, private, non-profit, self-governing, and voluntary.' Originating from concern and unease, Gerak Bareng seeks to understand the situation by providing solutions to the community according to their needs through planned humanitarian activities, namely social programs. This is in line with the opinion expressed by Taufik, (2012) that

'empathy is the activity of understanding what others think and feel, with the note that the person who is thinking and feeling for others does not lose self-control''.

Civic engagement in the *Gerak Bareng* social program shapes citizens' empathetic character by embodying the value of mutual cooperation in the implementation of the program. This aligns with the opinion expressed by Baron & Byrne, (2008); Astuti, (2014); Astuti, Kismini & Prasetyo, (2014) that 'the value of mutual cooperation can be realized when individuals have high empathy within themselves, as empathy fundamentally gives rise to tangible behaviors in the form of care for others and the surrounding environment.' This is reinforced by the statement of Hasyim & Farid, (2012) is: Character education is not only about the learning material, but also the activities that accompany and support it. Character education is not material-based, but activity-based. The goal of character education, particularly empathy, is to help adolescents develop virtuous potential that manifests in good habits (heart, mind, speech, attitude, and actions)

Education is not only pursued through formal schooling; therefore, it must also be promoted through family and community. Civic Education in society can be fostered, one of which is through social organizations that build citizens' empathetic character to care for others and the surrounding environment through their social programs. In line with this

Cogan (in Winarno, 2017, 2020) Explaining that 'Civic Education is a contribution to the development of the characteristics of citizens.' The experience provided by social organizations to citizens involved in humanitarian social programs is a manifestation of Civic Education in society, preparing citizens who are aware of their responsibilities. As stated by Arif, (2011); Setiawan, (2023) Explaining that 'citizenship education is the educational process aimed at preparing young citizens for their rights, roles, and responsibilities as citizens.' Empathy is needed to realize civic engagement and participate in humanitarian activities, as empathy can cultivate sensitivity in carrying out one's responsibilities toward others, as explained by Keen, (2007) that 'whoever has empathy, that humans feel empathy, empathy appears to be a fundamental aspect of human nature, and the lack of empathy can be seen as a sign of inhumanity''.

Empathy is essential in responding to societal culture, as the ability to understand the condition of others without losing self-control can provide the right solutions for others. As stated by Rogers (Zuchdi, 2003; Andayani, 2012; Anggraeni *et al.*, 2019; Izzati, 2021; Zuchdi & Afifah, 2021; Irawan & Masyitoh, 2023) Explaining that empathy is the ability to understand, feel, and respond to the feelings and experiences of others from their perspective, thereby building deeper

relationships and providing meaningful support to others.

An individual's involvement in togetherness within an organization, working collectively and cooperating to help those in need, directly impacts social change and accelerates the success of development. The act of helping is proof that empathy exists, as stated by Slote, (2008) Stating that 'empathy will encourage individuals to help, understanding that others need us, thus creating a sense of happiness when we are able to help.

Gerak Bareng has implemented its social programs in 48 cities across Indonesia as well as in regions in Asia such as Bangladesh and Uyghur. The concern of the *Gerak Bareng* organization through the implementation of its social programs in Indonesia and Asia reflects the character of empathy. Empathy is the core of success in social interactions, because fundamentally, individuals can be accepted if they act according to the expectations of society, which is achieved through the ability to understand others, known as empathy. This aligns with the opinion of Wulandari, Setyowani & Mugiarto, (2012) that: Empathy is the key to successful socialization in society. A person can be accepted by others if they have the ability to understand and behave according to the expectations of others. Therefore, the ability to empathize needs to be constantly developed by

everyone so that they can adapt to their environment.

There is little research on the role of social organizations in building community empathy, especially in relation to Civic Education. Social organizations are usually more associated with caring, while empathy is more researched by Counseling and Psychological Guidance majors. Therefore, this study examines social organizations that have a very important role in building empathy in humans. As it is known that empathy is the root of morality, the existence of empathy in community life can repair fragile and damaged social relationships. Darmiyati Zuchdi, a lecturer at FBS Yogyakarta State University in her research on "Empathy and Social Skills" shows the results that empathy allows humans to engage in good social relationships. This research only focuses on empathy and social skills. The difference in this study is that the focus of empathy refers more to the role of social organizations in relation to building empathy in society by fostering civic engagement through participation in organizational social programs, especially in the setting of Civic Education in society or the socio-cultural dimension.

In the 21st century Citizenship Education landscape, where social-emotional skills are receiving increasing attention, empathy emerges as one of the most sought-after competencies. In accordance with the findings of Nurgiansyah et al. (2024, p. 397)

that “one of the main competencies of 21st century Citizenship Education is that empathy is crucial in shaping an inclusive and harmonious society”. In an increasingly complex era of globalization, the ability to empathize allows individuals to build stronger relationships, appreciate differences and play an active role in solving complex social problems. Of course, in this case it corresponds with the opinion of Suriaman, et al (2024, p. 439) that “to build active citizenship, Civic Education offers cultural understanding and empathy”.

Empathetic behavior shown by society includes affection, giving, sharing, and cooperation. Affection is demonstrated through actions of offering help to others, providing attention, and adjusting oneself when in the midst of a community with different cultural backgrounds in each region. Giving and sharing are evident through civic engagement in various social programs carried out by *Gerak Bareng*, shown in the form of actions of giving and sharing with others. Cooperation is an essential element always present in the social organization of *Gerak Bareng*. In carrying out all of its social programs, *Gerak Bareng* consistently places cooperation as a key factor in determining the success of the programs being implemented (Irawan & Masyitoh, 2023; Irawan, Masyitoh & Sundawa, 2023; Irawan *et al.*, 2024). Cooperation is always evident among everyone involved in the social programs of

Gerak Bareng, whether it is between the management, volunteers, donors, officials, other organizations, and so on.

The formation of community empathy behaviors, such as compassion, giving and sharing and cooperation has an impact in prosocial theory that the running of *Gerak Bareng* social programs spread across Indonesia and abroad is the face of empathy itself, where citizens are involved by participating in helping people in need. Without empathy in humans, the individualistic nature will become large so that other people's problems are not their responsibility. With this ability to empathize, citizens behave prosocially. As Robert & Strayer (1986, p. 2) said that “empathy has a relationship with individual prosocial behavior”. In addition, the existence of empathy can bring people to care about each other by providing assistance, especially for the nation's young generation as an outdoor learning experience to build empathy in themselves by getting involved in humanitarian social organization programs. As Karliani (2017) states that: The social-spiritual values contained in Civics Education and the learning experience of students (indoors or outdoors) include the five noble values of Pancasila, gotong royong, deliberation, kinship, respect for cultural customs and differences, solidarity, responsibility, not hurting each other, hard work, and discipline.

The development of empathy in society improves social conditions, because with empathy, people implement compassion, give and share and cooperate with each other. Building empathy within oneself can be done through involvement in social programs implemented by humanitarian social organizations. With the awareness of the importance of empathy in life, it will increasingly grow and develop in society through the humanitarian social movement as a lifestyle.

CONCLUSION

Gerak Bareng plays a crucial role in building empathy within the community through its three social programs: empowerment programs, service programs, and mitigation and response programs. The role of the *Gerak Bareng* social organization in building community empathy is demonstrated through civic engagement in its social programs, with forms of empathetic behavior within the community shown through affection, giving, sharing, and cooperation.

Affection is shown through helping community members, providing full attention, and adapting to new environments. Giving and sharing are demonstrated through community involvement in various *Gerak Bareng* social programs, whether as donors or volunteers, such as participation in the Pasar Berkah event by providing 2,000 subsidized food packages, the Mass Circumcision program by offering 40

circumcision slots for children, and distributing 250 living support packages to communities affected by disasters. Cooperation is always evident in the implementation of *Gerak Bareng*'s social programs. This cooperation is demonstrated among all those involved in *Gerak Bareng*'s social programs, whether between the organization's management, volunteers, donors, officials, or other organizations.

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