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WHEN COMMUNITIES ENDURE: A Participatory Approach as a Pathway to Building the Resilience of Disaster-Affected Communities in Aceh Tamiang

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Abstract

The flash flood disaster in November 2025 not only left physical damage, but also tested the community's ability to survive and rebuild their collective life. The flash flood that struck the communities of Aceh Tamiang Regency in November 2025 demonstrated that communities are not merely recipients of aid, but also possess knowledge, social networks, and mutual cooperation that form part of how they respond to critical conditions and endure. Under such circumstances, a participatory approach becomes important not only for identifying community needs, but also for recognizing and strengthening the capacities that communities already possess.

This paper aims to examine how a participatory approach can become part of the process of building the resilience of disaster-affected communities in Aceh Tamiang. The study uses a qualitative descriptive case study based on experiences from post-disaster participatory activities in several affected communities. Data were obtained through field observations, group discussions, and the identification of community needs and assets. In Bandar Pusaka District, communities demonstrated local knowledge regarding locations considered safer based on their experience of facing the 2006 flood. This knowledge was again utilized when communities evacuated during the 2025 flash flood. Meanwhile, in Kota Lintang Bawah, communities expressed the need for communal sanitation facilities (MCK) and were involved in the process of determining the location, implementation, and management of the construction process. After the floodwaters receded, communities also rebuilt their homes by utilizing remaining materials from houses that had been swept away and sharing materials with residents in need.

These experiences demonstrate that community resilience does not solely depend on external assistance or intervention, but also rests on local knowledge, mutual cooperation, social networks, and the community's ability to take an active role in the recovery process. A participatory approach can provide a space to recognize, articulate, and strengthen these capacities. Thus, post-disaster resilience is not only built for communities, but also together with communities.

Keywords: community resilience, resilience, participatory approach, post-disaster.

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