

The Role of Youth as Agents of Change in Realizing Sustainable Development Goals: A Humanistic Theory Perspective

Nurul Atikoh^{1*}, Nur Rafita Suci², M Rizqi Mubarak³, M Yahya Nur Fuad⁴
^{1,2,3,4} Pascasarjana Universitas Islam Tribakti Lirboyo Kediri
*Corresponding author: nurulatikoh82@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Youth is a national asset whose potential is very influential in the development of a country. Youth is the successor to the heroes of the nation's predecessors. Youth have a diverse role in realizing sustainable development goals around the world. Therefore, various efforts are made to build the potential of youth throughout Indonesia. Through an understanding of psychological needs and individual potential, youth can be encouraged to take an active role in advancing sustainable development goals, not only as beneficiaries, but also as key actors in the process. This research aims to explore the role of youth as agents of change in the context of sustainable development, using the perspective of humanistic theory, specifically concepts such as self-actualization and psychological need fulfillment. Through the humanistic theory approach, this research analyzes how youth can be the driving force in the process of sustainable social transformation. The research method used is descriptive-qualitative research with data collection techniques in the form of interviews, observations, and literature studies from several sources of books and relevant scientific articles. The result of the research is the essential contribution of youth in the process of sustainable social transformation both on a local and global scale. As well as the need to understand the motivation, needs, and potential of individual youth based on humanistic theory. There are program recommendations that support the active participation and involvement of youth in various sustainable development initiatives.

Keywords:

Youth as Agents of Change, SDGs, Humanistic Theory

INTRODUCTION

Youth have an important role in building a country. The country will not progress without the participation of youth. Youth are the pioneers of development and progress. They will face many challenges in the current era where the flow of technology moves very fast and the times are uncertain. The role of youth today is very important and will even determine the progress of the nation and state. As the next generation of the nation, we stand to have the ability to change the fate of the Indonesian nation for the better. Not a few young people are complacent about the sophistication of technology and become the target of its negative side. (Bayuseti et al., 2023)

The problems faced by youth do not end there, youth are also confronted with a variety of issues that stem from the social, economic, political and cultural context of each community. Youth in many parts of the world face a number of challenges such as education where access to quality education is often a problem for youth, whether due to financial issues, inadequate educational infrastructure or conflicts that disrupt the learning process. Unemployment, high levels of unemployment among youth is a serious problem in many countries. This can be due to a lack of job opportunities, slow economic growth, or a gap between the skills possessed by youth and labor market demand. Mental health, youth often face pressures from various aspects of their lives, including academic pressures, family issues, and social and emotional challenges. This can lead to mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and stress. (Puspa et al., 2023)

Political instability, in some countries youth may face political instability that can disrupt daily life, including armed conflict, ethnic or religious tensions, and lack of effective political participation. Poverty, many youth around the world live in conditions of poverty or below the poverty line, which can limit their access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities. Environmental crises, youth often feel challenged by environmental crises, including climate change, environmental degradation and the preservation of natural resources. They feel responsible for fighting for sustainable solutions. Discrimination and inequality, youth from minority groups,

women, or low socioeconomic backgrounds often face discrimination and inequality in various aspects of life, including education, employment, and social life. (Nur et al., 2023)

Addressing these issues requires the cooperation of various parties, including governments, educational institutions, civil society organizations, and youth themselves. Quality education, fair employment opportunities, equal access to health services, and inclusive political participation are some of the steps that can help improve the condition of youth around the world. Youth as agents of change are expected to always actively participate in societal activities and act as agents of change at least for their own environment.

METHOD

The approach used in the research is a qualitative approach, which is an approach that produces descriptive data in the form of written words. With data collection techniques in the form of interviews, observations, and literature studies from several relevant book sources and scientific articles. Descriptive method is defined as a problem-solving procedure investigated by describing, describing the state of the subject / object of research (a person, institution, society and others) at the present time based on the facts that appear as they are which aims to describe a set of events or conditions of the current population. (Hasan et al., 2022)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Youth As Agents Of Change

According to experts such as M Juwaini, an Indonesian education expert, defines youth as a generation that is in the process of forming its personality and character. They are expected to have a spirit of learning, creativity, and positive contributions to society. According to Emile Durkheim, a French sociologist in his work on social functionalism theory, he mentions the importance of social integration and the transition from adolescence to adulthood as an important part of the development of society. According to Mohammad Hatta in his thoughts on Indonesian youth, he described youth as a social force that must have a spirit of nationalism, integrity, and a spirit of struggle to achieve independence and national progress. (Nasrullah, 2022).

Meanwhile, according to WHO, youth are citizens aged 10 to 24 years or in English called young people / youth, while ages 10 to 19 years are called adolescents or adolescena. So if we look at the references above, we can conclude that adolescents or youth start from the age of 17 where they already have an identity card (KTP) until the age of 24 or have graduated from college. (Hanz, 2021) Youth refers to the young age group in a society, usually in the age range between early adolescence and young adulthood. In general, they are undergoing significant physical, emotional and social changes. Youth are also often considered as a group that has great potential to shape the direction and future of a society, as they usually bring energy, fresh ideas, and passion to contribute in various fields. Youth can be involved in various activities, such as education, sports, arts, politics, and other social activities. They are often considered agents of change in society and can have an important role in social, economic, and political development. (Fahmy, 2023)

The role of youth is very important in the development of a nation. Soekarno, the first president of the Republic of Indonesia, once said "Give me 10 young men, and I will shake the world". The role of youth is as an agent of change, as an agent of change is the first important role. Indonesian youth today must have high dedication towards their country and nation as they will play a big role in the progress of their own country in the future. The progress of a country can affect rural communities with minimal impact. This progress is also expected to have a greater impact on the progress of the country and nation in the future. Agent of change itself is one of the five roles embedded in students. The five roles are social control, iron stock, moral force, and guardian of values (I Kadek et al., 2022).

Humanistic Theory

Abraham Maslow's humanistic learning theory emphasizes the understanding that the learning process is an effort to develop individual potential to the fullest. Maslow believes that every individual has basic needs that must be met before they can achieve self-actualization, which is the highest achievement in self-development. This theory emphasizes the importance of

motivation and human needs in the learning process. Maslow proposed a hierarchy of needs consisting of physiological needs, security needs, social needs, appreciation needs, and self-actualization needs.(Bagoes et al., 2021)

In an educational context, this theory is applied by creating a learning environment that supports and motivates learners to reach their full potential. This includes providing a sense of security, supporting positive social interactions, and valuing each individual as unique and valuable. Abraham Maslow's humanistic learning theory emphasizes the maximum development of individual potential and includes the concept of self-actualization. Self-actualization is the process in which a person reaches his or her full potential and becomes the best version of himself or herself. According to Maslow, self-actualization is at the top of the hierarchy of human needs. (Habsy et al., 2023)

Maslow identified several characteristics of individuals who have achieved self-actualization, including acceptance of self and others, spontaneity, problem focus, and having a strong life mission or purpose. The implementation of this theory in education means creating a learning environment that supports and motivates students to develop their full potential, while meeting their basic needs first.(Rahman et al., 2023).

Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of global targets designed by the United Nations to achieve sustainable development worldwide. The program was initiated on September 25, 2015 at the United Nations headquarters. The SDGs consist of 17 main goals with 169 measurable targets for the next 15 years (effective from 2016 to 2030). The goals of the SDGs are to address global challenges faced by the international community such as poverty, health, education, gender equality, clean water, sanitation, clean energy, inclusive economic growth, and environmental protection. These Sustainable Development Goals will not work by themselves without the cooperation between the government and Indonesian youth.(Maryanti et al., 2022)

Some of the main roles played by youth in sustainable development are as agents of change, youth are often regarded as agents of change who have the energy, passion and fresh ideas to create innovation and drive positive change in society. Future leaders, as the next generation, youth have the responsibility to shape the direction of sustainable development. They are expected to be future leaders who care about environmental, social and economic issues. Innovators, youth are often at the center of innovation in various fields, including technology, arts, and culture. They can be catalysts for change through new ideas and creative approaches to complex problems. (Faganza et al., 2023)

Pioneers of social change, youth are often involved in social movements and advocacy for justice, equality, human rights and environmental protection. They serve as pioneers of social change aimed at improving the overall well-being of society. Economic enablers and inclusion, youth are also valuable human resources in strengthening the economy in a sustainable manner. They can play a role in creating jobs, developing entrepreneurship, and promoting economic inclusion for all. Local development drivers, youth are often involved in local development projects that aim to improve the welfare of local communities, including infrastructure development, health services, education, and access to clean water.(Tri Wahyudi et al., 2024)

Therefore, youth have a very important role to play in sustainable development, both in local and global contexts. They are a force that can drive positive change towards a more sustainable, inclusive and equitable world. In order to develop youth for the achievement of SDGs, there are many Indonesian youth activist organizations that have several youth programs such as international conferences and volunteers by carrying out 4 divisions contained in 17 indicators of achieving SDGs, namely education, health, economy and environment. (Icha Permatasari et al., 2023) The existence of a youth conference program is expected to be a forum for discussion of youth related to global problems and can provide innovations and solutions that can be practiced or can even be a policy consideration for academics and the government. (Pongtambing et al., 2024)

Regarding volunteer programs or community service carried out in 3T areas, which are still many in Indonesia, it is also expected to have a significant impact by doing real work for a week - two weeks of service. However, community service activities also need a more advanced approach because there are still many 3T areas that close the access of youth in driving change. Therefore,

there needs to be support by agencies and governments in achieving sustainable development initiated by youth.(Rohman, 2023)

CONCLUSION

The role of youth as agents of change is crucial in realizing sustainable development. With education, innovation, active participation and policy influence, they can steer the world towards a better and more sustainable future. Youth often bring fresh ideas and innovative solutions to environmental and social problems that are much needed in sustainable development. With the right education, youth can be effective agents of change, increasing community awareness and ability to implement sustainable practices. The role of educational institutions that can be implemented concretely in showing their support for youth in achieving sustainable development goals is to hold independent community service on a regular basis because so far these activities have only been scheduled monthly by other organizations from outside the institution.

REFERENCES

- Bagoes Malik Alindra Dan Ahmad Makinun Amin, "Tokoh-Tokoh Teori Belajar Humanistik Dan Urgensinya Pada Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam" 1 (2021).
- Bayuseto, A., Yaasin, A., & Riyan, A. (2023). Upaya Menanggulangi Dampak Negatif Globalisasi Terhadap Generasi Muda Di Indonesia. *Integritas Terbuka: Peace And Interfaith Studies*, 2(1), 59–68. <https://doi.org/10.59029/Int.V2i1.10>
- Faganza, A. P., & Shoheh, R. (2023). Peran Sustainable Development Goals (Sdgs) Dalam Mengurangi Kesenjangan Sosial Di Indonesia.
- Fahmy Faradila Putri, Pemuda Memegang Peranan Penting Dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat, *Linkedin*, 9 Oktober 2023.
- Hanz Jimenez Salim, Who Keluarkan Kriteria Kelompok Usia, 25 September 2021.
- Hasan, D. M., Pd, S., Pd, M., Harahap, D. T. K., Si, M., Hasibuan, S., Rodliyah, I., Si, S., Pd, M., Thalhah, S. Z., Pd, S., Pd, M., Ratnaningsih, P. W., Pd, S., & Hum, M. (2022). Metode Penelitian Kualitatif.
- I Kadek Agus Aditya Putra, Dkk. Peran Generasi Z Dalam Mewujudkan Sdgs Di Era Society 5.0: Peran Generasi Z Sebagai Agent Of Change Dalam Mencapai Era Society 5.0, *Prosiding Webinar Nasional Pekan Ilmiah Pelajar (Pilar)*, Denpasar 24 Januari 2022.
- Icha Permatasari, Nau, N. U. W., & Putri Hergianasari. (2023). Peran Ngo Dalam Mendukung Sdgs Pendidikan Berkualitas (Studi Kasus: Project Child Indonesia Di Yogyakarta (2018-2022). *Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin*, 2(04), 19–34. <https://doi.org/10.56127/Jukim.V2i04.749>
- Maryanti, R., Rahayu, N. I., Muktiarni, M., Husaeni, D. F. A., Hufad, A., Sunardi, S., & Nandiyanto, A. B. D. (2022) Sustainable Development Goals (Sdgs) In Science Education: Definition, Literature Review, And Bibliometric Analysis. 6.
- Nasrullah, "The Role Of Youth In Program Achievement Sustainable Development Goals (Sdgs)," *Al-Irfan: Journal Of Arabic Literature And Islamic Studies* 5, No. 2 (September 17, 2022): 246–66.
- Nur, R. A. P., Truvadi, L. A., Agustina, R. T., & Salam, I. F. B. (2023). Peran Pendidikan Pancasila Dalam Membentuk Karakter Bangsa Indonesia: Tinjauan Dan Implikasi. 1(4).
- Pongtambing, Y. S., Manapa, E. S., Appa, F. E., Kalalinggi, S. Y., & Sampetoding, E. A. M. (2024) Sosialisasi Terkait Peran Organisasi Pemuda Dalam Mendukung Pencapaian Sdgs Di Indonesia.
- Puspa, C. I. S., Rahayu, D. N. O., & Parhan, M. (2023). Transformasi Pendidikan Abad 21 Dalam Merealisasikan Sumber Daya Manusia Unggul Menuju Indonesia Emas 2045. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 7(5), 3309–3321. <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.V7i5.5030>
- Rahman, A., Hayati, M., Rusmani, M. A., & Ilmi, D. (2023). Teori Belajar Humanistik Dan Implikasinya Dalam Pembelajaran. *Anthor: Education And Learning Journal*, 2(3), 402–409. <https://doi.org/10.31004/anthor.V2i3.156>
- Rohman, A. (2023). Implementasi Hak Partisipasi Pemuda Dalam Pemerintahan Desa (Studi Kasus Desa Linggar Kecamatan Rancaekek Kabupaten Bandung). 5(1).

Tri Wahyudi Dan Eka Askafi, Analisis Pro Gram Kepemudaan Berprestasi Untuk Meningkatkan Partisipasi Pemuda Di Dinas Pemuda Dan Olah Raga Kabupaten Tulungagung, April 2024.