

# The Role of “*Info Cegatan Klaten*”, a Social Community, on Strengthening Youth Civic Engagement

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**Abstract:** Globalization comes with technology and communication advancement. It brings various challenges to social life, especially the youth. The youth now tend towards being consumptive and hedonistic. Low social orientation but strong private orientation make them focus more on self-achievement rather than involving themselves on social problems. With that notion in mind, the social community of Info Cegatan Klaten (ICK) tries to strengthen young citizen's involvement to tackle problems in society. This research aims to identify how the role of that community on strengthening youth's civic engagement. This research uses a qualitative method by collecting data using interviews, observation, and documentation. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling. Data is analyzed using interactive analysis with the following steps: Data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The research shows that: 1) ICK community on Facebook is used as platform to provide any information concerning public problem and to accommodate public aspiration, both to be resolved directly or indirectly; 2) ICK community carry out social activities that strengthen the civic engagement of young citizen to overcome the problem of the society such as: Emergency responses, voluntary work, donation, house renovation, road marking, and many other social activities. A social community can be a platform for youth to become a citizen who understand their roles and responsibilities so that they can actively participate in society.

**Keywords:** *social community, civic engagement, youth citizen*

## INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, digitization and computerization have spread into all aspects. The impact of this technological and communication advancement may bring many challenges, especially for the younger generation. Youth desperately needs social network and cellular technology to meet their needs for daily information and communication (Milhailidis, Fincham, & Cohen, 2014). On the other hand, this technological advancement also provides ease in daily activities. This easiness tends to make the young generation to be consumptive and hedonistic. Strong self-orientation and the deteriorating youth social orientation make them focus more on their self-achievement rather than being involved in problems that exist in the community.

Anti-social behavior in the community especially in the young generation might be the reason for their diminishing social involvement in the community. “One of the things that picture the declining of concern is the lack of participation on social activities” (Buchari Alma, 2010 p, 207). Based on observation by the researcher in Klaten, the researcher found several phenomena that show low social attitude among youth. Among those phenomena are social activities such as voluntary work, youth that attend was only around 30% of the total number. Youth are hesitant to attend those activities for various reasons. Besides that, mannerism on youth also be considered as low, on October 2017 along Srowot Station road on Gondangan Village, Jogonalan sub-district there were some activities that trouble the community, reckless riding which mostly done by youth that threatened another people because one of those riders threw Molotov cocktail in the middle of the road (Maulana, 2017).

Uncooperative behavior and anti-social tendency shows how low youth civic engagement in their community. The low involvement of youth is included in civic education studies. Civic Education is an education that aims to prepare youth to become an outstanding citizen, citizen who understands their right and obligation to be actively active in society (Komara, 2017). Civic education has 3 domains curricular, socio-cultural, and academic (Wahab & Sapriya, 2011). Citizen's involvement in society belongs to the socio-cultural domain. "...The socio-cultural domain is both concept and practice of civic education in the community" (Wahab and Sapriya, 2011, p. 11).

This active participation to face public problems is known as civic engagement. Civic engagement to one individual or society has a purpose to give social benefit and to solve problems happening in society (Jacoby & Associates, 2009). Problem-solving in a society is the responsibility of all citizens including those considered as the young generation. Through their participation, youth are expected to able to help to solve a problem in society.

Civic socio-cultural program is known as civic community. Civic community is a group of people that has a social orientation with the aim to create a strong social hierarchy to face social changes (Mawarti & Sundawa, 2016). Civic community through social movement attempts to strengthen social relationships and to increase people's participation. The characteristic of civic engagement is that it is free from government intervention.

In this modern era, the civic community can be formed in the virtual world one of them is on Facebook. On Facebook, netizen form a community and communicate on that platform to deliver specific messages that aim to strengthen social relations and to improve social participation, especially the young generation. With social media, youth that listed as a community member can easily discuss and consolidate between members of a group and try to respond to any problem in society (Dewantara & Widhyharto, 2015). Media can be utilized as an effective platform to build youth engagement. The findings of the Martens and Hobbs research state that there are correlations between media usage and youth engagement (Martens and Hobbs, 2015).

Thus, an effort to strengthen youth engagement can be done on social media. The example of such a platform is Info Cegatan Klaten (ICK) community. ICK tries to empower youth in Klaten to actively involve in handling problems on society in Klaten region through various social activities. This research aims to identify how the role of that community on strengthening youth's civic engagement.

## **METHOD**

This research used a qualitative approach. Qualitative data include descriptive information and pictures. This research provides an overview, detail, and data analysis on a problem that occurs and focusing on actual problem-solving. The method for sampling is purposive sampling. In this research 6 informants were interviewed. Data collection uses interview, observation, and documentation. The interview was conducted with the chairman of the ICK community, community secretary, and four members of the community. The observation was done on ICK's Facebook page and activities in the community. Data analysis is based on Miles and Huberman's model (as cited in Sugiyono, 2015) consisting of three activities namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/ verification.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

ICK is a social community on Klaten found by Arie Bear. "ICK originally is a group on Facebook created by Arie Bear on 17 June 2014 with the purpose to share traffic info on Klaten Regency to the Facebook user" (Haryanto, personal communication. 2019, 23 June). To provide information about traffic which leads to traffic order. "The initial intention is to urge people to obey traffic rules" (Desi, personal communication. 2019, 9 July).

Along with time, ICK reached hundreds of members and on the agreement of its member, a gathering was held on Klaten town square in March 2016. "ICK grows rapidly, from dozens of members to hundreds even thousands, some member proposes a gathering on Klaten town square in March 2016, that was the first gathering of the members of ICK" (Munandar, personal communication. 2019, 25 March). After several gathering, a committee was made and so ICK had officially become a social community.

This community has an active member and a passive member. An active member is the member that directly involved in every community activity, signed as a member and committee, and possessing ICK official merchandise such as shirt, t-shirt, and hat. Active member on ICK is in the range 400 members. Meanwhile, the passive member is the member that joins on ICK Facebook page, they observe and interact on every information posted on the group, but not directly involved in actual events. The amount of passive members is around 474.000 users. ICK community members are mostly young citizens ranging from 16 to 30 years of age.

Following the purpose of the group which is to share any traffic information on Klaten, the committee that also serves as an administrator filter every information posted on the group. "We firstly filter on each post sent by members, the post should fit into group requirement to meet the purpose of this group" (Munandar, personal communication. 2019, 25 March). All posts posted on the group should be educative information so that the member of the group obey traffic rules, preparing all documents, and other riding/ driving equipment. "When there are any traffic raid, we broadcast educative posts so that people can prepare their documents and other equipment instead of avoiding the raid" (Desi, personal communication. 2019, 9 July).

As the information grew on Facebook, ICK community expands its coverage by interpreting the word "Cegatan" to not only limited to traffic and traffic raid Infos. However, the word "Cegatan" was interpreted in wider coverage. It covers any information that considered as problem. "problem such as; traffic jams, run out of fuel, flat tire, pothole, fallen tree, break down" - Desi (Interview, 9 July 2019). It is now expanded into a broader definition such as missing people's information, and lost and found, basically any problems that are considered as a public problem.

Committee now designs gathering into a platform where people can share their opinion on any social activities that can potentially be done by ICK community. With its jargon "GASS (Guyub Agawe Sedulur Selawase)" which means "Togetherness in kindness" (ICK's Memorandum & Article of Association, 2017). With its jargon, it is hoped to lift its member spirit to actively helping each other forever, putting forward the spirit of selflessness, improving their bond not only between the member of the community but to all of Klaten citizens.

On strengthening youth's civic engagement, ICK maximizes the utilization of Facebook as a platform for its members to provide any information regarding public problems and to accommodate any aspirations from the people. Facebook has a role as a platform to spread information to the public (Sari and Wibowo, 2018). Figure 1 shows the observation result regarding the existence of ICK's group on Facebook.



**Figure 1.** Display on ICK Facebook page.

The usage of Facebook as the platform is effective to provoke youth engagement because most youths are actively using Facebook. Backed by Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in 2017 on social media ownership data that say that 81. 7% millennials have a Facebook account, the notion becomes logical (CSIS, 2017). This statement is supported by Lim's statement "Young Indonesians are leading the way in internet use and are now perceived as the drivers of change through their uses of technology" (Lim, 2013, p. 146). From the information on Facebook, members will work together to provide solutions for public problems to be solved together, directly and indirectly. Relating to the definition of civic engagement according to Carpini (1996) "individual collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern" (as cited in Pancer, 2015, p. 3). This definition explicitly explains that any activities carried out by people involvement is an activity done to solve public problems. ICK community activities are fully designed and implemented by its members without any coercion, and every form of help provided by its member is pure self-awareness as an act of involvement in forming a better social hierarchy. "All activities are done voluntarily without any coercion" (Haryanto, personal communication. 2019, 23 June). This field finding is in line with Ervin Straub (1991) which he mentioned as "Pro-social value orientation", he thinks that the main reason on interpersonal relationship is "a positive evaluation of human beings, a concern about other people's well-being, and a feeling of personal responsibility for others' welfare" (as cited in Pancer, 2015, p. 28).

Besides that ICK has a role in strengthening youth involvement by conducting various social activities. Based on observation and interview, we can see several activities that can strengthen youth engagement, those activities are:

**Table 1.** ICK social activity

Name of Activities	The Implementation
Emergency Action	This is a conditional activity which is done to driver and rider that encounter problem on the road such as engine breaks down and a flat tire. The information will be posted on Facebook and will be responded to by nearby people.
Voluntary Work	This is environmental care done by collecting any garbage on the side of the road. This activity is conducted at the same time with Car Free Day activity.
Donation	Donating money, food, and goods to people who couldn't meet their daily needs.
House Renovation	Fixing uninhabitable houses.
Road Marking	Marking any damage on the road, for example, potholes, to minimize the accident from happening.

The following is picture documentation of social activities conducted by the ICK community.



**Figure 2.** Road cleaning.



**Figure 3.** Donation



**Figure 4.** House reparation.



**Figure 5.** Road marking.

Referring to one of perspective regarding civic engagement, Ramaley states that Civic engagement as community service, meaning any active citizen involvement on any voluntary

activity will improve the bond of the people (as cited in Addler & Goggins, 2005). From that definition, any social activities conducted by ICK community is a form of civic responsibility of its member involuntarily contributing to society in Klaten. This community not only act as gathering medium with result enjoyed by their circle but also provide a benefit that can be felt by Klaten society in general. So that this social community can be a platform for youth to become a citizen who understands their roles and responsibilities so that they can actively participate in society.

## CONCLUSIONS

ICK is considered as a civic community because this community is bound to civic value and free from government intervention. In strengthening youth engagement, ICK plays a very big role. This community provides youth to partake in solving problems in society. ICK provides a platform on Facebook that can gather youth to know and understand problems on their surrounding through information posted on Facebook, community members will try to solve any problems that arise directly or indirectly. ICK also has a role in conducting various social activities such as emergency action, donation, house renovation, road marking, and voluntary work. These various activities can be a good platform for the youth to participate in solving the problem in society so that they can understand their role and responsibility as a citizen.

From this research, it can be concluded that social communities like ICK which uses social media platforms as the main media to communicate between their members can reform youth to become more actively participating in solving the problem on society.

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