

The Effectiveness of Community Information Group Implementation in Community Empowerment: a study in Palembang City

Efektivitas Pelaksanaan Kelompok Informasi Masyarakat dalam Pemberdayaan Masyarakat: Studi di Kota Palembang

Yanuar Luqman¹, Muhammad Bayu Widagdo²

^{1,2} Universitas Diponegoro, Indonesia

^{1,2}Jl. dr. Antonius Suroyo, Tembalang, Kota Semarang, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia, 57772

Email: ¹yanuar.luqman@live.undip.ac.id

Received : July 9, 2026 ; Revised: July 22, 2026; Accepted: August 6, 2026

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis efektivitas implementasi Community Information Group (KIM) dalam pemberdayaan masyarakat di Kota Palembang dengan fokus pada visualisasi pesan publik. Berbeda dari penelitian terdahulu yang lebih banyak menyoroti keberlanjutan kelembagaan, akses teknologi, dan layanan digital, studi ini mengkaji bagaimana visualisasi pesan menghubungkan diseminasi informasi publik dengan pemahaman, partisipasi, dan tindakan masyarakat. Kajian menggunakan perspektif komunikasi pembangunan, komunikasi partisipatif, difusi inovasi, dan komunikasi visual untuk menganalisis proses pengolahan, penyederhanaan, visualisasi, dan penyebaran informasi pemerintah oleh KIM. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan data primer dari pengelola KIM dan masyarakat serta data sekunder berupa dokumen kelembagaan, literatur, dan informasi aktivitas KIM. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa efektivitas KIM bersifat bertingkat. Pada tingkat diseminasi, KIM relatif efektif dalam menyampaikan informasi layanan publik digital, edukasi antihoaks, promosi UMKM, dan program lokal. Namun, pada tingkat pemberdayaan, efektivitasnya masih moderat karena peningkatan perhatian dan pemahaman belum selalu berkembang menjadi perubahan perilaku, partisipasi berkelanjutan, atau dampak sosial-ekonomi yang lebih luas. Kondisi tersebut dipengaruhi oleh kapasitas relawan, kualitas konten visual, literasi digital, dukungan pemerintah daerah, dan tindak lanjut kelembagaan. Studi ini menegaskan perlunya mengombinasikan visualisasi pesan dengan komunikasi tatap muka, pendampingan, jejaring institusional, dan respons pemerintah. Kebaruan penelitian terletak pada penempatan KIM sebagai aktor komunikasi visual-partisipatif serta pembedaan analisis antara efektivitas diseminasi dan pemberdayaan.

Kata Kunci: Community Information Group; Komunikasi Pembangunan; Komunikasi Visual; Palembang; Pemberdayaan Masyarakat

Abstract

This study analyzes the effectiveness of the implementation of Community Information Group (KIM) in community empowerment in Palembang city with a focus on visualizing public messages. Different from previous research that focused more on institutional sustainability, technology access, and digital services, this study examines how message visualization links the dissemination of public information with community understanding, participation, and action.

The study uses the perspectives of development communication, participatory communication, diffusion of innovation, and visual communication to analyze the process of processing, simplifying, visualizing, and disseminating government information by KIM. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach with primary data from KIM and community managers and secondary data in the form of institutional documents, literature, and information on KIM's activities. The results showed that the effectiveness of KIM is multilevel. At the dissemination level, KIM is relatively effective in delivering digital public service information, antihoak education, MSME promotion, and local programs. However, at the empowerment level, effectiveness is still moderate because increased attention and understanding has not always progressed to behavior change, sustained participation, or broader socio-economic impact. These conditions are influenced by volunteer capacity, quality of visual content, digital literacy, local government support, and institutional follow-up. This study confirms the need to combine message visualization with face-to-face communication, mentoring, institutional networking, and government response. The novelty of the research lies in the placement of KIM as an actor of visual-participatory communication as well as an analytical distinction between the effectiveness of dissemination and empowerment.

Keywords: *Community Empowerment; Community Information Group; Development Communication; Palembang; Visual Communication*

1. Introduction

The transformation of digital communication technology has fundamentally changed how public information is produced, distributed, and received. In an increasingly rapid, open, and visually oriented communication ecosystem, the delivery of government information through formal, bureaucratic, and one-way communication is no longer sufficient (Donk & Snellen, 2021; Iurii et al., 2023; Scholl, 2022). Policy messages need to be translated into forms that are easier to understand, relevant to citizens' experiences, and capable of facilitating community engagement. Contemporary public communication problems are therefore not limited to the availability of information, but also concern how information is accessed, interpreted, trusted, and used in everyday life (Macnamara, 2026; OECD, 2023). This condition increases the importance of local communication actors that can bridge the language of government policy and the social needs of

communities (Aryal et al., 2024; OECD, 2023).

The Community Information Group (KIM) represents a community-based communication institution with a strategic role in local public information services. KIM is understood as a community formed from, by, and for the community that independently and creatively manages information and empowerment activities to provide added value to society (Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Indonesia, n.d.). Data from KIM.id cited in the research report indicate that, by early 2025, more than 2,790 KIM groups had been registered nationally, including 175 groups in South Sumatra (Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, 2025). These figures indicate that KIM is not merely a small-scale communication program, but part of a broader socio-communicative infrastructure for local public information services. The presence of KIM in South Sumatra therefore provides an important

basis for examining community-based public communication practices in Palembang City.

Conceptually, KIM reflects a shift from communication to people toward communication with people. Citizens are not positioned only as passive recipients of government messages, but as participants who can access, discuss, process, disseminate, and use information. KIM activities are organized through six functions known as ADINDA: information access, discussion of information, information implementation, networking or institutional networks, information dissemination, and community aspirations (Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Indonesia, n.d.). These functions show that KIM is expected to operate not only as a distributor of official announcements, but also as an information filter, a liaison among actors, a channel for community aspirations, and a facilitator of development communication at the local level (Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika Republik Indonesia, 2025).

The urgency of this study lies in the increasing importance of message visualization in public communication. Government policy information is often formal, lengthy, and technocratic. Without the adjustment of language and media, such information can lose communicative effectiveness. Media such as short films, videos, infographics, and digital posters can simplify information, attract attention, and help people understand public messages more quickly through the representation of Policy Content in the form of stories, images, scenes, and symbols relevant to everyday experiences. However, the visual appeal doesn't automatically result

in Community Empowerment. The effectiveness of visual messages is also influenced by the capacity of Community Information Group managers (KIM), the relevance and credibility of messages, local government support, community digital literacy, access to technology, and the last is exposure to misinformation and hoaxes. Furthermore, the effectiveness of KIM shouldn't only measured by the quantity or the range of information disseminated, but it is important to measure by the extent to which it develops into public understanding, participation, and action. To answer this problem, this study analyzes how KIM in Palembang processes, visualizes, and disseminates public information and how these practices contribute to community empowerment. The central research problem concerns the gap between the expansion of KIM as a public information infrastructure and its actual capacity to produce empowering outcomes. The existence of KIM and the circulation of visual content do not necessarily mean that communities have developed a greater capacity to access services, evaluate information, participate in local programs, or sustain collective action. Similar institutional arrangements may produce different outcomes depending on volunteer capacity, message quality, community digital literacy, local government support, institutional networks, and continuity of program follow-up.

This study is informed by four communication perspectives. Communication is viewed as a tool of social change that can develop awareness, participation and empowerment (McPhail, 2009) in development communication. Diffusion of innovation explains the spread and adoption of new messages, ideas, and practices according

to their relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability (Rogers, 2003). Participatory communication emphasizes dialogue, local knowledge, feedback, and citizen involvement rather than top-down information delivery (Servaes, 2008). Visual communication explains how images, infographics, videos, symbols, and layouts can attract attention, strengthen understanding, and shape public perceptions, while also stressing that visual effectiveness depends on clarity, contextual relevance, and connection with audience experience (Lester, 2013). Together, these perspectives allow KIM to be examined as a visual communication actor, an agent of information diffusion, and a space for community participation within local development communication.

Previous research on community-based information institutions has largely emphasized institutional sustainability, technological access, human resource capacity, policy support, funding, and service relevance. Thai et al. (2022) showed that telecentre sustainability in Vietnam depends on technological, political, financial, environmental, and socio-cultural factors as well as multi-stakeholder collaboration. Hasan and Tipu (2022) found that Union Digital Centres improved access to government services and the quality of life of rural communities. Rahmatullah et al. (2024) reported that the sustainability of such institutions remains constrained by human resources, ICT access, funding, and evaluation systems. Islam et al. (2025) further demonstrated that citizens' readiness to use digital services depends on motivational, technological, and human resource readiness, while

Alikhan and Alikhan (2025) emphasized infrastructure, training, community engagement, and sustainable management.

However, previous studies have not specifically examined how message visualization operates within KIM as a community-based public communication actor in Indonesia. Research on telecentres and community digital service centers has generally focused on institutional sustainability, technological access, human resource capacity, and public service delivery. Consequently, limited attention has been paid to how community communication actors translate formal government information into visual messages and whether this process can move citizens beyond information exposure toward participation and empowerment. This study addresses that gap by placing message visualization at the center of KIM communication practices and by distinguishing effectiveness at the levels of information dissemination, community participation, and community empowerment.

The present research focuses on KIM in South Sumatra, particularly Palembang City, in order that the communication practices of KIM can be analyzed contextually, not normatively generalized on the institution. It addresses three research questions: (1) How does KIM in Palembang City process government information into visual messages and disseminate it through digital and non-digital communication channels? (2) At what levels does message visualization demonstrate effectiveness in information dissemination, community participation, and community empowerment? and (3) What communicative, organizational, and contextual factors facilitate or constrain the transformation of visualized

information into sustainable community action?

By answering these questions, the study positions KIM not only as a channel for delivering government information, but also as an actor of visual communication and participatory in the regional development process. The study contributes through integrating development communication, participatory communication, diffusion of innovation, and visual communication to explain how public information is transformed into understanding, participation, and action. The analytical distinction between dissemination effectiveness and empowerment effectiveness provides a more critical basis for identifying the conditions under which message visualization may or may not evolve into meaningful participation and sustained social action.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study is based on four communication perspectives that explain the relationship between public information, message visualization, citizen participation, and community empowerment: development communication, visual communication, diffusion of innovation, and participatory communication. These perspectives are not treated as separate frameworks but are integrated to explain how the Community Information Group (KIM) transforms government information into messages that can be understood, adopted, discussed, and used by the community. Development communication provides the overarching orientation toward social change and empowerment; visual communication explains the transformation of formal information into accessible messages;

diffusion of innovation explains the dissemination and adoption of these messages; and participatory communication explains how information develops into dialogue, involvement, and collective action.

Development communication provides the main foundation of this framework. McPhail (2009) views communication as an important instrument for promoting development and social change. Communication therefore does not merely transmit information but also builds awareness, expands participation, and strengthens the community's capacity to engage in processes of change. This perspective is relevant because KIM operates at the local level to connect government information with community needs. KIM is not only an administrative channel but also a communication actor that helps citizens understand development information, relate it to everyday problems, and use it to improve their quality of life. KIM is consequently understood as a community formed from, by, and for the community that independently and creatively manages information and empowerment activities to provide added value to society.

From the development communication perspective, KIM effectiveness cannot be assessed solely through the quantity of information disseminated. It must also be evaluated according to the extent to which information increases understanding, encourages participation, strengthens the capacity to act, and contributes to social change. Message visualization is important within this process because it can bridge formal and administrative government language with the practical information needs of citizens. However, informative messages do not

automatically produce empowerment when communities lack opportunities to ask questions, provide feedback, participate in decision-making, or transform information into action.

Visual communication theory explains that the initial process through which KIM transforms the public information. Lester (2013) states that visual elements for instance images, colors, symbols, infographics, videos, and layouts can attract attention, strengthen understanding, and shaping audience perceptions. This perspective is relevant because government policy information is often lengthy, formal, and technical. KIM can represent such information through digital posters, infographics, short videos, narratives, images, and audiovisual content that are more concise, relevant, and accessible to the public.

Nevertheless, visual effectiveness is not achieved merely by presenting information as an image or video. Visual messages must demonstrate clarity, relevance, readability, accuracy, and closeness to the audience's experiences. Visualizations that are too technical may fail to simplify information, while overly simplified content may remove important policy substance. Therefore, KIM should balance the visual attraction, information precision, and suitability for the characteristics and needs of the community. In this framework visual communication explains effectiveness mainly on the level of message processing and dissemination of information.

Diffusion of innovation theory explains how visualized messages are disseminated, received, and adopted within the community. Rogers (2003) argues that the adoption of new ideas or practices is influenced by relative

advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. In this study, message visualization is regarded as a communication innovation because formal and text-based government information is transformed into a more accessible visual form. Citizens are more likely to adopt visual messages if they see the benefits, feel they are relevant to local needs, understand their content, are able to apply the recommended practices and see concrete results.

In this process, KIM can be an agent of change through introducing digital public services, supporting anti-hoax education, promoting local micro, small and medium enterprises, and encouraging participation in community activities such as urban farming and mutual aid. But reach of messages is not equal to adoption. Citizens can see and understand the information but they don't necessarily use it in their day-to-day lives. Interpersonal relationships, trust in sources of information, support from local leaders, and the relevance of messages to community experiences influence the sustainability of adoption. Therefore, the digital and visual communication must be accompanied by interpersonal communication and direct assistance so that the adoption does not remain on the awareness level.

Participatory communication theory explains how the reception of information develops into citizen involvement. Servaes (2008) argues that communication for social change should not be limited to a top-down process but should include dialogue, recognition of local contexts and participation of the community. This perspective is important because KIM ideally functions not only as an intermediary for government information but also as a space for

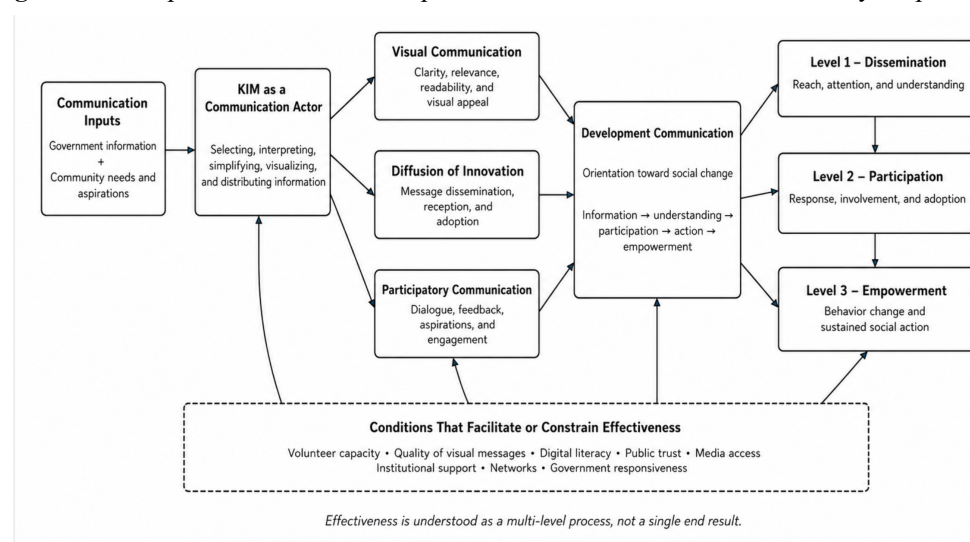
discussion, feedback, aspiration gathering, and citizen engagement.

KIM's functions including information access, information discussion, information implementation, institutional networking, information dissemination, and aspiration absorption—demonstrate its participatory dimension. Community empowerment is therefore not understood as an automatic result of information distribution. It develops through a communication process that enables citizens to understand, assess, discuss, adapt, use, and contribute to the dissemination of information relevant to their needs. Participatory communication thus connects the reception of information with participation and collective action.

The integration of the four perspectives positions KIM as a mediating communication actor between government information and community needs and aspirations. Visual communication is the process of turning formal information into accessible messages. Diffusion of innovation explains how these messages are disseminated, evaluated, and adopted. Participatory communication explains how information is developed through dialogue, feedback, and citizen involvement.

Development communication provides the broader orientation that connects these processes with social change and community empowerment. The integrated relationship among the four theoretical perspectives is illustrated in Figure 1

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of KIM Implementation Effectiveness in Community Empowerment



Source: Authors' conceptualization

As illustrated in Figure 1, KIM effectiveness is understood as a multi-level process. The first level is dissemination effectiveness, reflected in message reach, public attention, readability, and understanding. The second level is participation

effectiveness, reflected in community responses, dialogue, information use, program involvement, and adoption of recommended actions. The third level is empowerment effectiveness, which occurs when information use and participation generate behavioral change,

increased community capacity, strengthened social or economic activities, and sustained collective action.

Movement from one level to the next does not occur automatically. It is influenced by the capacity of KIM volunteers, the quality of visual messages, community digital literacy, access to media, public trust in KIM, local government support, institutional networks, and government responsiveness to community needs and aspirations. These factors can facilitate or constrain KIM's ability to transform public information into participation and empowerment. Consequently, successful information dissemination does not necessarily indicate that community empowerment has been achieved.

This framework is also supported by previous studies on community-based information centers. Thai et al. (2022) found that the sustainability of telecentres in Vietnam is influenced by technological, political, financial, environmental, and sociocultural factors. Hasan and Tipu (2022) showed that Union Digital Centres in Bangladesh expanded rural communities' access to government services. Rahmatullah et al. (2024) found that institutional sustainability remains constrained by human resources, ICT access, funding, and monitoring and evaluation. Islam et al. (2025) further demonstrated that citizens' readiness to use digital services is influenced by motivation, technology, and human capacity, while Alikhan and Alikhan (2025) emphasized the importance of infrastructure, training, community engagement, and sustainable management.

Previous studies have generally focused on institutional sustainability, technological access, public service

provision, human resource capacity, and policy support. In contrast, this study places message visualization at the center of KIM's communication practices and examines how visualized information develops into understanding, participation, and action. Its contribution lies in positioning KIM not only as a government information dissemination channel but also as a visual and participatory communication actor. The study also distinguishes analytically among dissemination effectiveness, participation effectiveness, and empowerment effectiveness.

Based on this integrated framework, the study contends that the efficacy of KIM depends on its capacity to translate government information into simple, relevant, accurate, and accessible visual messages; foster participatory communication with citizens; and secure institutional backing to allow information to develop into social action. Visualising messages can be useful at the dissemination level, but translating that into participation and empowerment is dependent on community digital literacy, trust in KIM, volunteer capacity, institutional networks and local government responsiveness. This framework is applied to analyze the potential of KIM as a channel of public information and community empowerment.

3. Research Method

This study applied a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the implementation of the Community Information Group (KIM) in processing, visualizing, and disseminating public information in Palembang City. This approach was selected because the study was not intended to measure KIM effectiveness statistically, but to explain

communication processes, institutional practices, and the conditions that support or constrain KIM's contribution to community empowerment. The research was on how KIM translates government information into visual messages, distributes the messages through digital and non-digital channels, and contributes to the enhancement of digital literacy, MSMEs promotion, participation in local programs, and community empowerment.

Palembang City was selected as the research locus based on KIM's use of community social media, WhatsApp groups, the KIM.id platform, physical information boards, and face-to-face communication. These channels are used to reach citizens with different levels of literacy and digital access. Data collection was conducted over a three-month period through in-depth interviews and a review of relevant secondary sources.

The study involved two informants responsible for the KIM program. One informant represented the government agency responsible for communication and informatics in South Sumatra Province, while the other represented the corresponding agency in Palembang City. The informants were selected purposively based on their institutional competence, direct involvement in the development and implementation of KIM, and knowledge of information dissemination, capacity development among KIM managers, and coordination between government institutions and KIM. Their selection was based on their authority and knowledge relevant to the research focus.

The research used primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with the two

informants. The interview guide was developed based on the objectives and research questions and covered information management, message visualization, dissemination channels, the development of KIM members, community participation, institutional coordination, implementation barriers, and the contribution of KIM activities to community empowerment. The semi-structured format provided a consistent framework while allowing the researcher to explore the informants' explanations, experiences, and empirical examples.

Secondary data were obtained from institutional documents, program information, government publications, official KIM websites, documentation of KIM activities, relevant literature, and other institutional information concerning KIM implementation. These sources provided contextual information and were used to compare the informants' explanations with available documentary evidence.

Data analysis is done through the stages of data organization, reduction, categorization, interpretation, and conclusion. Data from interviews and documentation are prepared based on the source and its relevance to the focus of research. Furthermore, the data is reduced and categorized into seven main themes: information management, message visualization, dissemination processes, community participation, institutional support, implementation barriers, and Community Empowerment. Each theme is interpreted using the perspectives of development communication, participatory communication, diffusion of innovation, and visual communication.

These themes were interpreted through the perspectives of development communication, participatory communication, diffusion of innovation,

and visual communication. Development communication was used to examine how information contributed to understanding, participation, social action, and empowerment. Visual communication was used to analyze the clarity, relevance, readability, accuracy, and accessibility of visual messages. Diffusion of innovation was used to explain the dissemination, reception, and use of information or practices introduced through KIM. Participatory communication was used to examine dialogue, feedback, aspiration gathering, and citizen involvement.

The analysis distinguished KIM effectiveness at three interconnected levels. Dissemination effectiveness was examined through information reach, public attention, readability, and understanding. Participation effectiveness was examined through community responses, dialogue, information use, involvement in programs, and adoption of recommended actions. Empowerment effectiveness was examined through behavioral change, increased community capacity, strengthened social or economic activities, and sustained social action. This distinction prevented successful information dissemination from being automatically interpreted as evidence of community empowerment.

The trustworthiness and authenticity of the research were maintained through source triangulation and an audit trail. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the interviews with institutional documents, program information, government publications, official KIM sources, and documentation of KIM activities. This comparison was used to identify similarities, differences, and consistency between the informants'

explanations and the available secondary data.

The research process was also documented through data organization, thematic categorization, and records of the basis for interpretation. This documentation served as an audit trail that allowed the relationship among the data, analytical themes, theoretical interpretation, and research conclusions to be traced. Trustworthiness was therefore established through the credibility of the informants, triangulation of interview and documentary data, consistency of interpretation, and transparency of the analytical process.

Formal ethical approval was not obtained for this study. The research involved non-interventional interviews with adult institutional informants and was considered to pose minimal risk because it did not involve medical procedures, experimental interventions, or the collection of sensitive personal, medical, or biometric data. Before the interviews, the informants were given an explanation of the research objectives, the form of the participation requested and the use of the information for academic purposes. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained and the informants had the right to refuse to answer specific questions or to cease participation at any time. Confidentiality of the research data was maintained and the disclosure of identities, positions and institutional affiliations was done to the extent of openness agreed with each informant.

4. Findings and Discussion

For consistency of attribution, the two interview participants are identified as Informant 1 and Informant 2. Informant 1 was an official from the government

agency responsible for communication and informatics in South Sumatra Province who was involved in KIM development, while Informant 2 was an official from the corresponding agency in Palembang City who was responsible for KIM implementation and development at the municipal level. Their accounts were triangulated with institutional documents, program information, official KIM sources, and available documentation of KIM activities.

4.1 KIM as a Communication Node and Visual Mediator

The findings show that the Community Information Group (KIM) acts as a communication node connecting provincial and municipal government institutions, urban village administrations, and local communities. Informant 1 explained that KIM is developed as a government partner in disseminating information on public services, digital literacy, stunting reduction, inflation control, poverty reduction, and other priority development issues. Informant 2 similarly described KIM as a communication link between local government agencies and citizens in Palembang City.

KIM performs two related communication functions. In the government-to-community direction, it receives, selects, simplifies, and disseminates information on public services, development programs, environmental activities, digital literacy, and economic empowerment. In the community-to-government direction, KIM is expected to communicate citizens' needs, complaints, feedback, and aspirations. However, the interview findings indicate that the dissemination function remains more dominant than

dialogue and aspiration gathering. KIM has therefore begun to operate as a two-way communication actor, although its bottom-up function still requires strengthening.

Informant 2 explained that government information is often too lengthy, technical, or administrative to be distributed directly to citizens. KIM adapts this information through infographics, digital flyers, activity photographs, short videos, social media content, WhatsApp groups, the KIM.id platform, physical information boards, and face-to-face meetings. These practices allow KIM to translate policy language into forms that are closer to citizens' communication habits and practical needs.

Message visualization is consequently one of the main instruments in KIM's communication practices. In Palembang, visual content is used to explain digital public services, clarify misinformation, promote local micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and disseminate information on environmental and community activities. Informant 2 stated that KIM development includes technical guidance on infographic design, short-video production, news writing, citizen journalism, digital flyers, and information dissemination. Informant 1 also emphasized that KIM members are encouraged to use verified information channels connected to government institutions.

These findings extend Hasan and Tipu's (2022) analysis of community digital service centers. While their study primarily emphasized the expansion of access to government services, the Palembang findings show that access alone is insufficient. KIM also performs communicative mediation by

transforming bureaucratic information into messages that are understandable, contextual, and relevant to citizens' everyday experiences. The strategic value of a community information institution therefore lies not only in the availability of technology but also in the capacity of local actors to interpret and contextualize public information.

4.2 Message Visualization and Multilevel Effectiveness

The findings indicate that message visualization is relatively effective at the dissemination level. Concise and practical content that is directly connected to citizens' needs is more likely to attract attention, be understood, and be redistributed through community networks. Information on public service procedures, government assistance, anti-hoax education, MSME products, urban farming, and community activities is more readily received than information that retains its original administrative form.

Visual content on municipal digital services helps citizens recognize complaint channels and e-government procedures. Anti-hoax content increases awareness of the importance of verifying information, while photographs and short videos provide local MSMEs with greater visibility in community networks. KIM also disseminates information on urban farming and helps connect community groups, including Dasawisma groups, with seed assistance and technical training from relevant government agencies.

Nevertheless, the available evidence primarily demonstrates improvements in message reach, attention, and initial understanding. It does not show that exposure to visual information consistently produces behavioral change, sustained use of digital services,

or measurable economic improvement. Even with the increased awareness of misinformation, digital literacy has not always been consistently practiced in terms of checking sources before sharing information. This is based on bisa confirmation, trust on informal sources and limited critical information skills.

KIM assists MSMEs with promotional photos, videos and social media contents in economic empowerment. But the effect is mostly observed in community networks as promotions are not consistently linked to e-commerce platforms, business mentorship or wider market networks. KIM can increase the exposure of the first product, but it does not have the resources to ensure an increase in sales or the sustainability of the business.

Local program participation also varies. Messages about urban farming, mutual aid, environmental activities, health services, flood warnings and social assistance seem to get stronger reactions than more general information from the government. However, participation could go down when there are delays in technical assistance, resources or responses from the responsible government agency.

These patterns demonstrate that KIM effectiveness operates at three interrelated but distinct levels. Dissemination effectiveness concerns whether information reaches citizens, attracts attention, and improves understanding. Effective participation is when citizens react, discuss information, use services, participate in programs or communicate aspirations. Empowerment effectiveness requires increased capacity, access to resources, decision-making ability, behavioral change, and continuity of social or economic action.

KIM is relatively effective at the dissemination level and has begun to contribute at the participation level. However, its effectiveness at the empowerment level remains moderate because information and participation do not consistently develop into sustainable change. Message visualization therefore functions as an entry point to empowerment rather than as a factor that automatically produces it.

This finding supports Lester's (2013) argument that visual elements can increase attention and facilitate comprehension. However, it also identifies the limits of visual communication in an empowerment context. Transforming information from text into images or videos does not automatically transform citizens' behavior. The visual effect depends on the relevance of the message, the credibility of the source, the public trust, the ease of application, the follow up by the institutions, and the resources available.

The results also challenge the optimistic assumption that greater digital access translates directly into an improved quality of life. Hasan and Tipu (2022) show that community digital centers can improve access to public services. But the Palembang case shows that the relationship between the access to information and empowerment is not in line. Access is one condition, empowerment requires mentoring, market networks, institutional responsiveness and sustained program support.

4.3 Variation, Volunteer Capacity, and Institutional Dependence

The findings suggest that KIM implementation is not uniform. The documentary evidence suggests that active KIM groups tend to associate

government programs with real community needs, while passive groups tend to function only on demand or on special occasions. In Palembang, Klaten and Karanganyar practices show more active communication. Whereas, activities of KIM in Salatiga and Magelang is more situational. These variations indicate that similar institutional arrangements may produce different results depending on local capacity, social structure, communication pathways and institutional support.

In Palembang, KIM demonstrates relatively strong activity in digital public service dissemination, MSME promotion, anti-hoax education, and urban environmental programs. In non-urban settings, however, face-to-face facilitation and direct assistance may be more influential than rapid digital-content production. Information is often received through community leaders, interpersonal relationships, and local social networks. KIM effectiveness therefore depends not only on message content but also on communication channels, social trust, and community characteristics.

One major implementation challenge is the voluntary character of KIM membership. Informant 2 explained that most KIM members undertake their activities without regular financial incentives. This structure strengthens KIM's community-based identity but causes the consistency of content production and communication activities to depend on personal motivation, available time, technical skills, and individual resources.

Graphic design, news writing, videography, editing skills, storytelling, and social media management skills are not evenly distributed. Some members are able to produce photos, flyers and simple videos, but content quality

remains dependent on individual capacity. The use of personal mobile phones, free applications, limited internet quotas and inadequate production equipment further curtail visual competitiveness. This challenge is particularly significant in Palembang because KIM content must compete with viral information and professionally produced media in a dense urban information environment.

The Palembang case consequently differs from telecentre studies that primarily focus on infrastructure availability. KIM faces not only problems of access to technology but also competition for public attention. Visual-content production is therefore not merely an additional technical skill; it is an institutional capacity required for KIM to maintain relevance and credibility.

Another challenge concerns the characteristics of official government information. Informant 2 explained that materials received from local government agencies are frequently lengthy, rigid, and administrative. KIM must simplify them without removing essential policy substance. Excessive simplification can reduce accuracy, while retaining all details can produce messages that are too dense and unattractive. The quality of visual communication therefore depends not only on KIM volunteers but also on the readiness of government institutions to provide communication materials that can be adapted for public use.

Informant 1 emphasized the importance of interinstitutional coordination to ensure KIM's receipt of accurate and verified information. Government agencies may have delays in responses that could lead to information silos and may prevent KIM

from providing timely clarifications. This becomes particularly problematic as misinformation spreads faster than official information. KIM may have to carry a heavy load of communication but it lacks the power and institutional resources to address the issues raised by citizens.

The findings are consistent with the studies of Thai et al. (2022), Islam et al. (2025) and Alikhan and Alikhan (2025) that human resource capacity, technological readiness, training, infrastructure, institutional support, community engagement are important conditions for community information institutions. However, the Palembang case reveals a more complex institutional dependence. KIM depends not only on training and technological infrastructure but also on the quality of government information, the speed of interagency coordination, and the responsiveness of public institutions to citizens' needs.

The findings are also in congruence with Rahmatullah et al. (2024) who identified human resources, ICT access, funding and monitoring and evaluation constraints. However, the Palembang case adds two communicative factors: the ability to translate administrative information into messages that are easily understood and the continuity of the government's response to information and aspirations communicated through KIM. KIM is therefore relationally effective and not determined by the performance of volunteers or quality of media alone.

4.4 Hybrid Communication and Citizen Participation

The digital divide remains an important constraint on KIM implementation. Older citizens, groups with limited access to technology, and people with lower levels of digital literacy cannot always access or

understand information delivered through social media. Digital communication therefore cannot be KIM's only strategy.

Informant 1 explained that digital channels must be combined with interpersonal communication because community access and literacy differ across areas. For digitally isolated groups, face-to-face meetings, citizen forums, information boards and direct assistance are more inclusive and trustworthy. The hybrid communication strategy uses digital media to amplify messages and interpersonal communication to gain understanding, trust and actions.

Message visualisation should therefore be an amplifier of social communication, not a replacement for direct interaction. Visual content can attract attention and make information more digestible, but community forums and direct mentoring allow citizens to ask questions, interpret information and relate it to their own circumstances. Therefore, the success of KIM is based on the integration of visual content, social relations and institutional support. It is visual content accessible, trust built in social relationships and follow-up assured with institutional support.

This finding reinforces Servaes' (2008) participatory communication perspective. KIM's effectiveness cannot be measured solely through information distribution. Communication for social change requires dialogue, citizen participation, recognition of local knowledge and room for communities to participate in the management of information.

The participatory dimension of KIM is visible when members absorb community aspirations, assist citizens in understanding public services, promote

local MSMEs, and organize community-based activities. However, participation remains uneven. In some practices, KIM still operates through a predominantly top-down pattern because its primary activity is forwarding government information to citizens. Under these conditions, visualization increases message attractiveness but does not yet function fully as a medium for dialogue. Citizens may receive information without having sufficient space to discuss, negotiate, or transform it into collective action. The transition from information to participation therefore requires dialogue and community organization, while the transition from participation to empowerment requires access to resources, mentoring, institutional networks, and policy follow-up.

4.5 Interpretation through Communication Theories

From a development communication perspective, KIM is a local communication actor that transforms public information into a social resource. The more useful the information on public services, digital literacy, MSME promotion and environmental activities from the government, the more it helps citizen access services, identify economic opportunities and participate in community programs. This supports McPhail's (2009) view that communication should contribute to awareness, participation, capacity, and social change rather than merely transfer messages.

However, the development communication function of KIM is not yet fully optimal. Information dissemination has been relatively successful but visual messages have not consistently produced behavioral change, sustained service use, or economic improvement. These findings suggest that

the success of development communication is dependent on the integration of messages with community assistance, institutional support and government responsiveness.

From the diffusion of innovation perspective, message visualization constitutes a communication innovation because it transforms formal and text-based government information into infographics, digital flyers, narrative photographs, short videos, and social media content. As Rogers (2003) suggests, messages are more likely to be accepted if citizens see clear benefits, relevance to local needs, low complexity, practical applicability and visible results.

KIM acts as an agent of change when it helps citizens recognize government digital services, distinguish valid information from misinformation, promote local products, and participate in community activities. Nevertheless, message adoption depends not only on the format of the medium. KIM's credibility, social closeness, speed of information delivery, interpersonal explanation, and institutional follow-up also affect public acceptance. Visual messages may generate awareness, but adoption requires trust and direct assistance.

From the visual communication perspective, KIM practices confirm that images, infographics, videos, symbols, and layouts can strengthen attention and comprehension (Lester, 2013). At the same time, the findings show that visual quality remains uneven and depends on volunteers' technical skills, available equipment, and the quality of the source material provided by government agencies. The principal challenge is balancing accuracy and attractiveness without either reducing policy substance

or overwhelming citizens with administrative details.

The integration of these theoretical perspectives explains why KIM effectiveness must be understood as a multilevel process. Visual communication supports message transformation and initial understanding. Diffusion of innovation . Spread and adoption . Participatory communication: dialogue and involvement of the citizens. Development communication connects these processes to the larger goal of community empowerment.

4.6 Contribution and Overall Effectiveness

The main contribution of the findings lies in positioning KIM not merely as a channel for disseminating government information but as a visual and participatory communication actor. KIM mediates between administrative government information and citizens' practical needs by selecting, contextualizing, visualizing, and redistributing public messages. In the opposite direction, it is expected to communicate community aspirations to public institutions.

The findings also demonstrate that dissemination, participation, and empowerment are analytically distinct outcomes. KIM is relatively effective in making government information more recognizable, concise, and accessible. It has begun to encourage service use, community involvement, and the communication of aspirations, although participation remains uneven. Its effectiveness in community empowerment remains moderate because visual information and participation have not consistently generated sustainable behavioral, social, literacy, or economic change.

Informant 1 and Informant 2 provided complementary perspectives. Informant 1 emphasized provincial development, verified information channels, institutional coordination, and government support. Informant 2 explained operational practices, content production, community responses, MSME promotion, urban farming, and implementation constraints in Palembang City. Their accounts and the documentary evidence indicate that message visualization is an important bridge between public information and community understanding, but it cannot operate independently of social relationships and institutional support.

Overall, KIM implementation in Palembang is relatively effective at the dissemination level and has begun to contribute to participation, but its effectiveness at the empowerment level remains moderate. Strengthening KIM requires technical training in visual-content production and citizen journalism, improved volunteer capacity, more consistent hybrid communication, stronger interinstitutional coordination, broader integration of MSME promotion with digital markets, and faster government responses to community needs and aspirations. These improvements are necessary for KIM to move beyond content production and become a sustainable component of community-based development communication.

5. Conclusion

The results showed that the implementation of Community Information Group (KIM) through message visualization has a significant role in strengthening community-based public communication. KIM serves not only as a channel for delivering

government information, but also as a local communication actor that bridges the interests of local governments, village or kelurahan governments, and the community. Through the use of infographics, digital flyers, short videos, photos of activities, social media content, and other visual forms, KIM was able to simplify government messages that tend to be formal into information that is easier to recognize, understand, and disseminate. KIM's effectiveness is seen quite strongly at the level of information dissemination, especially in the dissemination of Public Services, anti-hoax education, MSME promotion, and invitation to participate in community activities. However, such effectiveness has not fully continued at deeper levels of empowerment, as increased citizen awareness is not always followed by behavior change, sustained participation, or significant economic impact.

Thus, the visualization of messages can be positioned as a strategic initial instrument, but it is inadequate when used in isolation. KIM's success in encouraging community empowerment is strongly influenced by the capacity of cadres, the quality of content production, the level of community trust, digital literacy of citizens, local government support, and institutional responses from related Regional device organizations (OPD). This finding confirms that strengthening KIM should be directed to a hybrid communication strategy that integrates digital channels with face-to-face communication, citizen forums, direct assistance, and responsive institutional networks. From a communication perspective, KIM's effectiveness will be increased if he builds dialogue, facilitates citizen actions and ensures that information can be translated into sustainable social

capacity, collective participation and Community Empowerment, not only produces and disseminates visual messages.

References

- Alikhan, S., & Alikhan, M. M. (2025). Assessing telecentres as a strategy for bridging the digital divide in rural communities of developing countries: A narrative review. *Journal of the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka*, 28(2), 118–156.
<https://doi.org/10.4038/jula.v28i2.8113>
- Aryal, B., Poudel, B., Karki, J., & Bhandari, S. (2024). Expectation of the Communication Mechanism and its Gap in Public Administration: Approaches to Communication between Local Government and Public. *Nepal Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 7(2), 109–126.
<https://doi.org/10.3126/njmr.v7i2.68251>
- Donk, W. B. H. J., & Snellen, I. (2021). *Public Administration in an Information Age - A Handbook*. Bohlau.
<https://doi.org/10.3233/978-1-60750-952-3-i>
- Hasan, M., & Tipu, M. N. A. (2022). Access to the government services and improving rural life through Union Digital Centres in Bangladesh: A cross-sectional study. *The Journal of Developing Areas*, 56(3), 147–162.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/jda.2022.0048>
- Islam, M. T., Hasan, A. A., & Faysal, A. (2025). Factors influencing the readiness of rural people to use Union Digital Center services in southern Bangladesh: A behavioral intention approach. *Journal of Electronic Business & Digital Economics*, 4(2), 283–295.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JEBDE-09-2024-0036>
- Iurii, P., Olena, A., Anna, I., & Rostyslav, P. (2023). The History of Information Communication Technologies in Enhancing Public Administration Efficiency. 369–371.
<https://doi.org/10.1109/ukrmico61577.2023.10380350>
- Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika Republik Indonesia. (n.d.). (2025). *Tentang KIM Komunitas Informasi Masyarakat*.
- Lester, P. M. (2013). *Visual communication: Images with message* (6th ed.). Lex Publishing.
- Macnamara, J. (2026). Strategic Communication and Public Policy: A Major Gap and Opportunity for Research, Practice, and Democracy. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 1–27.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118x.2025.2572076>
- McPhail, T. L. . (2009). *Development communication : reframing the role of the media*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- OECD. (2023). *Integrating communication in the policy cycle and supporting citizen participation*. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
<https://doi.org/10.1787/e2d2d981-en>
- Rahmatullah, M., Islam, M. N., & Kulsum, U. (2024). Assessing the sustainability of Union Digital Centers (UDCs) in northern region of Bangladesh: A study on Nilphamari District. *Journal of Social Science*, 7(1), 118–141.
<https://doi.org/10.71213/jss.july2407>

- Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of Innovation* (5th ed.). Free Press.
- Scholl, H. J. (2022). *Digital Government Research: A Diverse Domain* (pp. 51–71). Springer.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-92945-9_3
- Servaes, J. (2008). *Communication for Development and Social Change*. Sage Publication
- Thai, D. M., Duong, D., Falch, M., Xuan, C. B., & Thu, T. T. A. (2022). Factors affecting the sustainability of telecentres in developing countries. *Telecommunications Policy*, 46(3), 102265.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2021.102265>