

Strengthening Sumbanese Women's Economic-Self Resilience to Alleviate Poverty¹

Rini Hastuti¹, Angelina Ika Rahutami², Shandy Jannifer Matitaputty³, Elizabeth Lucky M. Sitinjak⁴

¹Taxation Department, Soegijapranata Catholic University, Indonesia
rien@unika.ac.id

²Management Department, Soegijapranata Catholic University, Indonesia
ika@unika.ac.id

³Taxation Department, Soegijapranata Catholic University, Indonesia
shandy@unika.ac.id

⁴Accounting Department, Soegijapranata Catholic University, Indonesia
lucky@unika.ac.id

1 Introduction

Higher education has three important roles, namely providing teaching, research, and community service. Therefore, despite of developing academic and scholarly things, universities are also required to play a role in developing the community by actively participate solving the problems of the community. With those three main roles, universities have good entry points to be increasingly involved in developing the community.

A university cannot be sustainable without socially taking responsible, moreover when poverty has been becoming a main problem of the country. The expression is also a commitment of the Soegijapranata Catholic University (SCU) to be inclusively involved in alleviating poverty. Spirit and tagline of the university is *talenta pro patria et humanitate*, that means rendering your talent to the nation and humanity. As with the slogan, SCU realizes that social involvement in the community is something that cannot be avoided. Serving the community is a critical component as the socially responsible institution. A collaboration between universities and communities is good and important to achieve a prosperous society. Higher education institutions are expected to be able to help the community starting from developing their own potential resources, and then helping the community gain access to the next stage of self-development both with technology and networking with various interested parties.

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One of the provinces of Indonesia that becomes the concern of SCU was East Nusa Tenggara (Nusa Tenggara Timur or NTT). This province is the poorest province in Indonesia. One of the district in NTT is East Sumba which as the second rank of poverty in NTT. The number of poor people in East Sumba was 144,010,000. As one of embodiment of the tagline, SCU has been providing facilities and scholarships for students from NTT to take an academic degree in SCU. But this is not enough to help people in NTT escape the poverty circle because of the complexity of poverty problems. Therefore, poverty alleviation in NTT becomes a commitment of SCU.

Women in Sumba tend to be marginalized because of the culture that place them lower than men, moreover if the women have low level of education. If women are not the ones who participate in poverty alleviation programs and if gender analysis is not used to seek the root causes of poverty, poverty alleviation programs will have limited impact in public space. The Indonesian government has serious concern for gender equality and poverty alleviation. It can be inferred from some policies and regulations related to the protection and empowerment of women. Starting from 2002 to 2008, there have been at least six gender based regulations. But there has not been comprehensive gender regulation that yet integrates both of gender equality and poverty reduction dimensions.

Responding the issues, we are called to realize university's values into activities within the frame of University Social Responsibility (USR). The main motivation is how to encourage changes in women's behavior for reducing poverty and strengthening economic resilience? This project has four objectives, they are:

- 1) To assess and analyze the poverty condition and poverty alleviation policies with a gender perspective in East Sumba.
- 2) To deliver the insight to local government and other stakeholders on gender mainstreaming in development policy and strategy).
- 3) To open new perspective and to motivate female-headed of poor household about productive economy.
- 4) To motivate Sumbanese students who are pursuing their academic degree in Semarang, to return home after graduating from university, then to develop their respective regions.

2 Theoretical framework/literature review

There is a big movement from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into University Social Responsibility (USR). CSR must be understood as a concept whereby companies

integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis (Vasilescu, et.al., 2010). The concept of CSR can be applied and modified in the university. The USR concept is about the need to strengthen civic commitment and active citizenship; it is about volunteering, about an ethical approach, developing a sense of civil citizenship by encouraging the students, the academic staff to provide social services to their local community or to promote ecological, environmental commitment for local and global sustainable development (Bokhari, 2017, Vasilescu, et.al, 2010).

As many universities realize, serving the community is a critical component of a socially responsible institution. The university should work in a triple dimension, economic, social and environmental, and at the same time, it undertakes specific action in its structure across three sections: teaching, research and community services. The concept of social responsibility is no longer confined to charitable and voluntary activity, but it is in fact a broader and more comprehensive concept that comprises solutions for societies economic, social and environmental problems (Bokhari, 2017, Vasilescu, et.al, 2010).

Some researchers of European higher education found that there were changes in force, trends, and challenge. Gibbons (2005) stated that nowadays universities were affected by new context of political thinking, globalization, innovation, and knowledge economy. Jonasson (2008) found that there were visible trends in university sector: (1) World student number, more people took their higher education at their adult life. (2) Institutional drift, it means that many universities that offers vocational program joined the university community, so that the system is massively growing. (3) higher education run business activities; Vasilescu et al (2010).

Cansarana et.al. (2010) stated that Service learning is put on the curriculum because teachers have responsibility to do the jobs, like social integration, social leadership, and the need of practice activities. The lesson must be well transferred to the students, so the preparation before doing the real service learning is important in order to have productive activities.

López et.al. (2014) claimed that University social responsibility (USR) is based on the four impacts how the organization generates in the environment: social and organizational, and educational and cognitive (specific to academic institutions) (Vallaeys, 2009:11 and 12). The impacts defines four axes of university social responsibility, they are: Campus responsible, vocational training and citizenship, social participation, and social knowledge management.

Shawyun in Lopeza (2014) stated principles of USR:

- a. Determined outcome by the university.
 - 1) Community of learners and scholars.
 - 2) Graduates who have equal knowledge and wisdom, and good character.
- b. Determined contribution of university.
 - 1) Improvement of locality, society and humanity through increasing, strengthening and transforming the potential of the community and nationally. University provides services to the community through the involvement and affordability of society, economic and national development, preservation of national heritage in art, religion and culture, buildings, socio-economic aspects that enhance and achieve sustainable development. Increasing the competitiveness of the country at the world level, realizing the welfare, justice, security, and sovereignty of the country by upholding and values humanity.
 - 2) Developing local human resources, assisting community leaders who are creative and entrepreneur.
 - 3) Dynamic, educated and critical community development while disseminating the results of sustainable research in the fields of science, technology and art that will benefit national and international communities.
 - 4) The progress of world civilization by producing graduates who have global insight, tolerance, and good academic achievement, and are committed to National Development and Social Responsibility.
 - 5) Produce, promote and disseminate knowledge and learning, develop human knowledge through qualified research and education.

Reiser (2008) in Bokhari, 2017 stated that USR is a performance ethics quality policy from the university community (students, lecturers, and administrative staff) through management responsible for the impact of education, cognitive, labor and the environment produced by the University.

While Vasilescu, *et al.* (2010: 4178) in Bokhari, 2017 defined USR as the need to strengthen active citizenship commitments; it is also about voluntary, ethical approaches, developing a sense of nationality by encouraging students, academic staff to provide social services to local communities.

According to Giuffré & Ratto (2014: 234), USR is University's ability to disseminate and implement a set of general principles and specific values, using Management, Teaching, Research and Training processes, through the provision of educational services and the transfer of knowledge that follows ethical principles, good governance, respect for the environment, social involvement and promotion of values

This project tried to implement the USR in East Sumba. Any groundwork that we have conducted are supporting and in line with poverty and whole person education. Some of our previous researches are: Gender issues of poverty alleviation in Indonesia (2017), Poverty alleviation through family empowerment (2017), The Development of Outdoor Learning to Foster a Sense of Social Awareness and Nationalism Insight through Community Service Outdoor service learning (2017), Ensuring Food Security and Reducing Poverty through Gender on Development: Indonesian Case (2016), Does the Feminization of Poverty Really Occur in Indonesia? A critical analysis of gender and development (2016), The Development of Self-helping Model for Poverty Alleviation on the Productive Poor Group (2015). The government budget synergy to alleviate poverty (2011).

3 Methods

There were three main activities designed to achieve the objectives, as outlined below:

1. The poverty assessment and alleviation policy analysis. We assessed the conditions of poverty especially women who head poor households. We also analysed the poverty policies in East Sumba. The gender and development approach were used in the assessment and analysis.
2. Workshop for local government and NGOs. The local government had a serious concern about gender and poverty problems. The workshop was focused on gender mainstreaming and women empowerment. Local NGOs that had the same concern were also invited and involved to get more comprehensive description about real condition of woman empowerment. The workshop was held also to strengthen communication and collaboration between the local government and NGOs.
3. Workshop for women head poor household. This workshop was intended to provide knowledge about women equal rights and how to develop the productive household economy.

4. Workshop for Sumbanese students. The students were encouraged and motivated to develop their respective regions after they pursue their academic degree outside the region.

4 Results and Discussion

SCU has conducted several charity activities for the poor around the campus in Semarang. These social or charitable activities are carried out in the form of providing packages of basic necessities (groceries) and organizing cheap markets. For students and employees, live-in activities are also held as a means of reflection on life because they have to live in the midst of the poor. Not only staying in poor people's homes, but live in participants must also be able to enlighten the community about the daily problems they face.

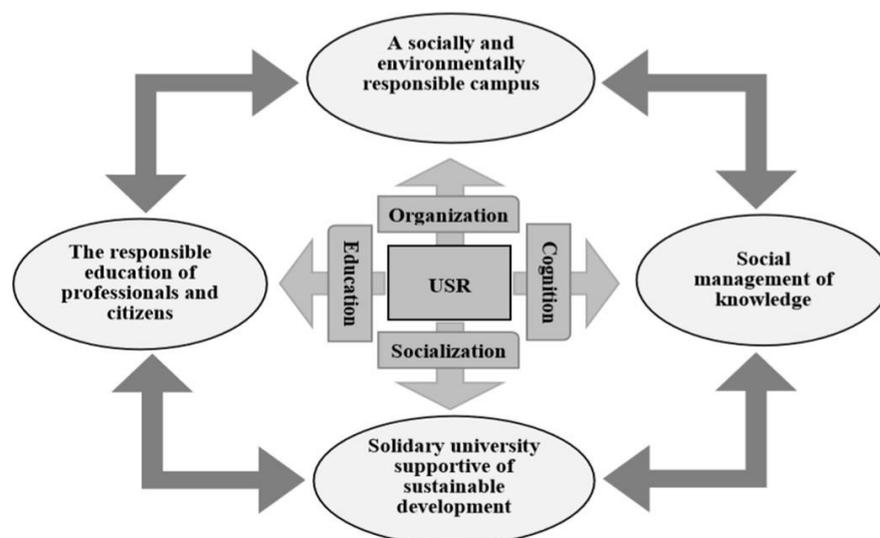


Figure 1. Universities' Areas of Social Responsibility

Source: Bokhari, A. (2017)

Lecturers as a body of university organizations have their primary functions such as teaching, researching, and community service. Therefore, collaboration between lecturers, education staff, and other stakeholders in managing universities can make the university socially responsive in giving 4 aspects. The four aspects of USR are: organization, cognition, socialization, end education.

- a. Organization, SCU is a campus that has institutional responsibility both socially and environmentally, on campus and outside the campus. The responsibility for the

environment is realized by planting 1,000 trees in the campus environment and each employee has the duty to care for them until the tree grows well for the next 1 year.

- b. Cognition, SCU has been known as a Private university that has had many collaborations in various fields with institutions from within the country and also abroad, both in the field of community service and research.
- c. Socialization, SCU has several social networks and applications that facilitate communication between students, lecturers and other stakeholders. Social management of knowledge can be felt by the entire academic community, starting from the process of admitting new students, choosing courses at the beginning of the semester, the learning process, the academic guidance process, to the graduation registration process and job search. Applications that can be downloaded are Vanika (Unika Virtual Assistant) and Dimas (Student Information Dashboard) is a virtual figure whose job is to help students through their respective gadgets. Both have different work areas. If Vanika is on the chat Line application with @vanika identity, Dimas is currently in the Play Store.
- d. Education, SCU has professional resources that are committed to playing an active role in alleviating poverty and improving the quality of life. Therefore, the formed curriculum provides learning outcomes related to improving the quality of social life and the progress of civilization based on Pancasila.

SCU uses its resources to play important role in developing the country, the role is embodied in every aspect of life. Various competencies that are held, enable staff to collaborate in projects of poverty alleviation. Competence, technology, and finance are blend together to inclusively participate developing the society. In spite of our previous project, SCU is currently conducting another project in Sumba, co-working with Wira Wacana Christian University, we are developing Sumba traditional weaving to be promoted online to reach broader market. Sustainable. Various programs carried out sustainably between SCU and the local government of Sumba, as well as between SCU and local universities, and also with the local community further strengthened the formation of ecosystem collaborative good. So that all potentials and facilities owned by each party can be used optimally for the realization of a prosperous and independent society, which is free from poverty.

4.1 Poverty condition and poverty alleviation policies with gender perspective in East Sumba

We had assessed the conditions of poverty especially women who head poor households. We also had analyzed the poverty policies in East Sumba. The gender and development approach were used in the assessment and analysis.

East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) is the poorest province in Indonesia. Sumba is one of the islands of NTT province. The island has 4 districts, namely East Sumba, Central Sumba, Southwest Sumba, and West Sumba. Central Sumba is the poorest among the district, but the characteristic is similar. Our previous research in Central Sumba in 2016 found that life expectancy was 63.14 years; 77.6% of the population literate and the rest 22.4% is illiterate. While Indonesia period of compulsory education was 9 years (it includes 6 years in elementary school and 3 years in junior high school), the average of school period in central Sumba was only 5.39 years. It means that there were many people in Central Sumba had not even finished elementary school. That indicator numbers led high illiteracy rates and fostered the vicious circle of poverty.



Figure 2.
Most of Sumbanese people work as farmers and fishermen. They sell limited quantities of agricultural crops, due to dry and barren conditions.



Figure 3.
Sumbanese women, despite of earning a living they also have an important role in caring for children. Every day, the mothers of Sumba educate, play with and care for their children.

There were strategies and activities that had been enforcing to alleviate those numbers by the government. National standard of poverty that was used to assess and treat the poverty apparently needed to be adjusted considering local conditions. This was because poverty in Sumba had a unique and specific criteria that was different from other province. For example national poverty criteria uses the condition of the house to determine the level of poverty (bathroom availability, types of the ceiling and floor, and types of the walls of the house). We

could easily find the inappropriate houses at Sumba, but in reality the owners were not so poor. They had many livestock and extensive fields to raise a family living. Therefore it strongly emphasized that stronger monitoring and controlling were thus needed during the implementation of the strategies.

There were program and activity regarding poverty alleviation, it had been being carried out into four substances: (a) Social assistance (donation or charity); (b) Micro-economic and financial empowerment; (c) Community empowerment (job creation and opportunity); and (d) Food security. However, it had not been able to successfully reduce poverty yet. Even though it was 31,47% of the total local government budget in 2018 was allocated for the poor, still it had not had direct implications to the poor as mandated by the law nor even it had not totally involved the community in the grass root. Local government officials acknowledged that there were programs wrongly targeted so that rich people still receive the aids and benefits of poverty alleviation programs.

Evaluation of the grants found that assistances or donation to the poor should be based on welfare condition of the family (Desil 1 to 4, poorest to least poor). For example, productive programs and activities were more suitable for those in the upper desil (3 and 4), donation is perfect for those in the poorest level (Desil 1) in order for them to survive, and combination between the two is fit for those in desil 2. In the fact, there were programs and activities that were exchanged and misdirected.



Figure 4.
The natural conditions of East Sumba depend heavily on rain. During the rainy season, the trees will flourish, but when the dry season arrives the east Sumba will be very dry and it is difficult to get water.



Figure 5.
The portrait above is a picture of the remaining rainwater. Because of the difficulty of clean water, people are very dependent on rainwater. These puddles are used to drink livestock and irrigate their agricultural / plantation areas.

It needs a strong political will to intentionally use the grants for the poor. Affirmative and cultural approach should also be imposed to relieve poverty in Sumba. The aid and other

assistance program for the poor should also consider patriarchy, because the head of the family is not always the husband but the wife. It was stated by the gender activist that there were some decisions that raised men in favor, for example the aids was mainly distributed according to the presence of man in the family.



Figure 6. Picture of the condition of Sumbanese housing. Most of the people living in East Sumba use woven coconut leaves. Poverty can be at glance seen from the condition of their home.

Related to gender issues, poverty in Sumba had a multi-dimensional aspects:

- a. Division of roles between men and women in the household.
- b. Genealogy or family history that established social stratification.
- c. Family generation that showed different roles; second generation ruled the whole family, while the third were not necessarily involved.
- d. Earned revenue; the greater the revenue, the greater the role in the family.

4.2 Gender mainstreaming in development policy and strategy for local government

Collaboration with the local government was initiated in 2016 when the team leader conducted research in NTT. The government of NTT has a serious concern about gender and poverty problems. They wanted to have good policies and strategies to escape the status of the poorest provinces. The networks between SCU and local government of NTT was kept remaining; sustained with several scholarly activities such as scholarship, research, trainings, and community service activities. The collaboration between the two creates an ecosystem for collaborative good. There were several parties involved: local government, NGOs, academics, and of course the community. Collaboration activities related with this project was to hold a workshop for local government that was focused on gender mainstreaming and women empowerment. The local government as a represent of the ruler had a significant role to alleviate property. The local government took responsibilities to determine strategies and

policies, such as allocating the budget, conducting the program and activities, monitoring and evaluating the impact, making a good and clear communication or sometime negotiation with central government and other external parties committed to poverty alleviation. Regarding to the project, they contributed roles by publishing the permit, delivering the insight, sharing of experience and information of what and how they run the government policy. They welcome and received advice, input, and feedback from all stakeholders concerned with poverty (NGOs, academics, and the community). So that the reports they receive from field officers can be re-examined. The local government were agree to consider fact findings to improve future poverty alleviation program.



Figure 7.

The workshop participants: Local government, NGOs, and academics, and the community representatives.

The above picture was taken after the workshop. The participants were representative of local government (NTT regional planning and development agency or Bappeda propinsi NTT and Bappeda kabupaten Sumba Timur, NTT social service or Dinas Sosial propinsi NTT and Dinas Sosial kabupaten Sumba Timur, and NTT woman's empowerment service or Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan), NGOs who had concern to woman empowerment, and local academics who were experts in the field of Sumbanese women's empowerment.

Just like an iceberg, the discussion came to topic that there were many problems of poverty beneath the surface if it subsequently was compared to those on the surface. We found that organizing traditional ceremonies and nurturing various cultures might influence poverty because it was costly to do the rituals. People would set aside other needs that might be more important and urgent than the traditional rituals. Enabled by the development of information technology in this era of globalization, the local culture had interacted with global culture. Local wisdoms were contaminated and they turned origin cultural point of view to become money-based one. This had made Sumbanese people consequently had desire to govern properties or other assets. We could state that it was not bad, but the tradition to preserve culture

could lead to poverty when it came in contact with economic interests-based on the prevailing market system, because people considered financial and economic benefits more than nurtured the tradition.



Figure 8.
Image of the back yard of the house. In the picture, we could find a cooking stove, a cage and an outdoor bathroom in one open area. We easily could find this similar condition of Sumbanese's housing.



Figure 9.
The children of East Sumba. The people of East Sumba generally have a large number of children (more than three children in one family). We also found two or three families lived together in the same house. This condition is an economic burden for families, especially women.

Ideally, every program and activity for the community must pass the gender-based budget system, but this cannot yet be realized. It seems that values of gender awareness had not been internalized in women who were engaged in decision making (the elders). Hence to be successful in economic independence, it was strongly recommended to empower young unmarried woman.

Some cultural rituals that created controversy because it needed so many resources to be sacrificed was Belis. Belis is a tradition to give dowry from groom to bride. Usually, the dowry is economically determined by caste, the position of the family in the community. The higher value of the woman, the higher value of the dowry is given. They also have Kabungkur, a term for village meeting. Men of the family will discuss a topic and make decisions accordingly. Usually the men will ask for opinion of certain woman of the family, but the decisions are still on men. The agreement binds people ethically. Caste pyramid in Sumba: (a) Man; (b) Woman; (c) Child; (d) Maramba; (e) Hamba. Women are in the second place in the

pyramid after men. It means that men have considerably a higher position than women. Socially, there are two types of Sumbanese woman:

1. The fate woman, this type of woman tends to surrender accept their destiny. They sincerely accept their fate without any attempts to get out of situations which may burden them.
2. The survival woman, this type of woman has strong desire to get out of their situation that burdens them. They work hard, keep trying to get involved in village activities as an activist, join the trainings or workshops that are held by government or NGOs.

The value of women in the eye of Sumbanese people: “mata waipataku ping ai bapunggu”. This means that:

- 1) Women are a place to get water and to establish a house.
- 2) Women are a source of welfare
- 3) Women have important role as food divider, they determine who and how much food to be consumed for every member of the family.
- 4) Women will sacrifice themselves for sustainability of the family life.
- 5) Women have to ensure that everything in the family is enough and fairly distributed.

Women actually have high position in the family. The elder women are pointed as the representative; their opinions on something are heard and considered by the head of the family. Women do not merely hold re-production function but also production, they raise livestocks, they make weaving, they work in the fields, etc. There are also several obstacles preventing Sumbanese women to develop and empower themselves. The obstacles come from the culture that inhibits them to have access to banks. Even though Sumbanese women receive lots of expensive dowry, they cannot put it as their guarantee to get credit from a bank.

4.3 Workshop on Productive Economy for Female-Headed of Poor Household

The role of Soegijapranata Catholic University (SCU) to get involved in the community in alleviating poverty and improving quality of life is written in the SCU Master Plan for Research and Community Service for the period 2015-2019. The vision of SCU is an excellent community in education, research, and community service that live together with Christian values: love, justice and honesty. This vision could be achieved including by conducting community service as the implementation of science and technology that had been developed in research for human welfare; giving attention and finding solutions to various socio-cultural problems of society through the academic community; developing a network with various

local, national and international institutional through teaching, research, and community service.

At the point of giving attention and finding solutions to various socio-cultural problems of society through the academic community, SCU emphasized information on the important role of women in society and in the family. The role of women who provide additional income in the family, or can even become the main breadwinner but still do not leave their role in the family as mothers.

In developing a network of cooperation with various institutions; SCU, among others, has been collaborating with Wira Wacana Christian University (UNKRISWINA) in terms of research and community service to the Sumba community.

In a workshop held for the people of East Sumba, the SCU aroused enthusiasm and motivation for the women in Kuta village about the importance of seeking additional income for their families. At the workshop there were local volunteers who shared their experiences and key steps to achieve success in managing the family economy by seeking for the opportunities and abilities they have considering internal and external potency. Sumba has a beautiful landscape and nature, the tourism potency is even just at their own backyard. East Sumba's natural beauty can be a distinct advantage in the development of the tourism industry. Local communities assisted by local governments can further develop tourism into an industry. By doing so, it is expected that local community will be able to have additional income consequently the local economy can grow higher.

During the session of sharing in which the participants expressed their opinions, they listened and discussed inspirational stories from the successful native speaker. We found that most of Sumbanese women understood the importance of education. This was indicated by their commitment to support their children to pursue higher degree of education although they are in financial difficulty. One surprising thing was that the participants were very open-minded to receive new information or new knowledge. They have high curiosity and willingness to try new things. This reality was against our previous belief that Sumbanese poor-people are difficult to receive a new paradigm.

4.4 Encouraging Sumbanese Students who are pursuing academic degree in Semarang

Sumba students who were studying in Semarang were gathered in an activity entitled "loving and developing tana humba". In this activity the students were reminded again that their aim to migrate temporarily in Semarang was to study, to get knowledge and experiences that were useful for their next life when returning to Sumba to take part in advancing and

developing their homeland. Each of the students shared their experiences of lives, about how the conditions of their communities where they lived and the challenges faced by the people of Sumba; including about the conditions of poverty that still occur and gender issues in the Sumba community. At the end of the activity they were given the opportunity to privately reflect on their noble desires and aspirations to develop Sumba. They were asked to write down their idea, most of them wish for someday they would return back to Sumba and would dedicate their life to actively participate developing their homeland. To be a profesional, a full-spirited people who devote their lives to the advancement of their homeland.

5 Conclusions and contributions to theory and practice

Poverty is not only about a term in social economic, it might also be related to gender aspect. Poverty in Sumba has a unique characteristic that are different form other region in Indonesia. It is important to consider cultural approach in alleviating poverty. Patriarchal and caste systems in the Sumba community make women have a heavier burden than men. As a kind of social responsibility, higher education must play a greater role in this matter. This role can be realized, among others, by establishing collaborations and continuous coordination with local governments, universities and local academics, and related NGOs. Topics related to poverty alleviation become the theme of activities that optimize the resources owned (human resources, natural resources, support capacity of the central government, funding, technology, institutions, and the role of the community) for the establishment of ecosystem collaborative good. Therefore, the effective way to achieve economic resilience of Sumba society is to allign culture, paradigm, and behavior of the society; and the unmerried Sumba women will be the targetted group of society.

Keywords: University Social Responsibility, Poverty, Woman Empowerment, Economic Resilience

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Biographical sketch of each presenter

Please send the biographical sketch of the presenters together with the proposal using the following format:

Presenter 1:

- i. Last name followed by first name: Hastuti, Rini
- ii. Position/department/organisation/country: Taxation Department/Soegijapranata Catholic University/Indonesia
- iii. Short biography (word count should not exceed 70 words)

Rini Hastuti, SE, MSi, CA is a lecturer on taxation at Soegijapranata Catholic University Semarang. In the university, she has managed as a Department Head of taxation program (2008-2012). She currently officiates as the head of Unika Soegijapranata Tax Center. She is also active in tax research and publication in the national and international forums.

- iv. Contact information (address, email address, homepage)

Email: rien@unika.ac.id

Website: -

Address: Karangrejo Selatan VI/30 RT 4 RW 8 Tinjomoyo, Banyumanik, Semarang, Indonesia

Presenter 2:

- i. Last name followed by first name: Rahutami, Angelina Ika
- ii. Position/department/organisation/country: Management Department, Soegijapranata Catholic University, Indonesia
- iii. Short biography (word count should not exceed 70 words)

She is a doctor of philosophi at management department of Faculty of Economics and Business Soegijapranata Catholic University Semarang, Indonesia. Her latest researches that are relevant to this project are Alleviating poverty and strengthening economic self-resilience in East Sumba: woman and development approach (2018), Gender issues of poverty alleviation in Indonesia (2017).

- iv. Contact information (address, email address, homepage)

Email: ika@unika.ac.id

Website: -

Address: Mawar II no. 10 Taman Bukit Hijau, Semarang, Indonesia

Presenter 3:

- i. Last name followed by first name: Matitaputty, Shandy Jannifer
- ii. Position/department/organisation/country: Taxation Department/Soegijapranata Catholic University/Indonesia

- iii. Short biography (word count should not exceed 70 words)

She is a full time lecturer and researcher in Faculty of Economics and Business Soegijapranata Catholic University Semarang, Indonesia. She became a lecturer in 2014. Before working as a lecturer, She worked as a research assistant at Institute for Research and Community Services (LPPM) Universitas Diponegoro. She has been developing many research in terms of economic development, poverty and taxes.

- iv. Contact information (address, email address, homepage)

Email: shandy@unika.ac.id

Website: -

Address: Kruing Timur Dalam 2 No. 30, Semarang, Indonesia

Presenter 4:

- i. Last name followed by first name: Sitinjak, Elisabeth Lucky Maretha

- ii. Position/department/organisation/country: Accounting Master Degree
Department/Soegijapranata Catholic University/ Indonesia

- iii. Short biography (word count should not exceed 70 words)

She is a doctor of phylosophy at Accounting Department. She has some research on the gender-based investment decision making. Results of the research lead her to pursue research on demographic differences in investing. Apparently, women are more conscientious in investing because they consider about family finances, they also care about the importance of saving to pay immediate expenditure.

- iv. Contact information (address, email address, homepage)

Email: lucky@unika.ac.id

Website: -

Address: Gondang Timur IV Perum. Grand Tembalang Regency blok D1 no.4,
Semarang, Indonesia

Abstract overview:

A university cannot be sustainable without being socially responsible. This is also a commitment of Soegijapranata Catholic University (SCU), especially to alleviate poverty in east Sumba. We have found that poverty has caused women have heavier burden than men, some customs even make it heavier. Therefore, we have held some activities to encourage changes in women's behavior for reducing poverty and strengthening economic resilience. The most effective way to alleviate the poverty is to harmonize culture, paradigm and behavior.