

Buddy Program for Bureaucrats: A Grassroot Movement of Bureaucrats to Make Indonesian World-Class Government

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Abstract

It is hoped that a world-class government in Indonesia can be realized in 2024. One of the efforts to realize the government's vision is proven by the social movement of the Indonesian bureaucracy at the grassroots innovation level at the end of 2023. With social learning and experiential learning methods, movement amplification in the form of a buddy program can be obtained by both its resonance throughout the bureaucracy and society.

Analysis of the research process experimentally with the learning methods that have been mentioned is documented and included in simple knowledge management utilizing Artificial Intelligence resources available on the Internet which can become knowledge management for all Indonesian bureaucrats.

Based on empirical study through experimental results, it is proven that social movements through buddy programs in the bureaucratic sphere could untangle the tangled threads of government governance even in a small scope. The hope is that in the future, every innovation effort at the grassroots level needs to be supported and its implementation replicated as much as possible at a wider bureaucratic level and reaching the public so that innovation at the grassroots level becomes more widely useful and shows that the Indonesian bureaucracy has reached world-class level.

Keywords:

grassroot innovation; buddy program; bureaucrats; learning; social movement

Introduction

Before entering the era of Society 5.0, the State Civil Apparatus or Indonesian bureaucrats (ASN) was stereotyped as a burden on the state and had low productivity. This is not without reason, the low awareness of ASNs to improve their competence goes hand in hand with the low effectiveness of governance. Thus, the public always receives public services that are far from satisfactory. However, this stigma needs to be eliminated. The National Institute of Public Administration of The Republic of Indonesia (NIPA) as a government agency that has the mandate to improve the competence of Indonesian ASN consistently demonstrates public service innovations so that Indonesian ASN can upgrade their abilities to contribute to fulfilling the organization's vision and mission.

Until the last quarter of 2023, the Government issued Law Number 20 of 2023 concerning State Civil Apparatus (UU ASN). Regardless of the pros and cons and discussions that are currently hot, the UU ASN has certainly brought about a long discussion on the management of ASN as human resources owned by the Government known as Civil Service Human Resource Management. One of the fundamental changes in Civil Service Human Resource Management is the change from the personnel administration approach which is only in the form of administrative records of personnel to human resource management and transformed into Human Capital. This approach views civil service human resources as state assets that must be managed, valued, and developed properly.

NIPA Regulation Number 10 of 2018 concerning Competency Development State of Civil Apparatus has clearly stated various types of competency development that can be implemented by every ASN throughout Indonesia. However, there is often reluctance or reluctance from ASNs to develop themselves. Zulpikar stated as quoted by Sumanti (2018), that human resource development through training programs is not based on individual or organizational needs. This problem often causes employee dissatisfaction because civil servant management is not implemented with a merit system.

Competency development in the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) environment plays a crucial role in improving the quality of public services and bureaucratic effectiveness. However, the challenge of increasing the ASN training rate is one of the main focuses, especially since there are still many new ASNs who do not understand the world of bureaucracy comprehensively. Based on the results of the policy exposure by the Center for Development of ASN Competency Development Programs and Policies at the end of 2022, the low training rate reflects the need for an innovative learning approach that is tailored to the needs of ASN.

In this context, many ASNs are still in the early stages of their careers and do not fully understand the complexity of the world of bureaucracy. This can create an imbalance in performance and a direct impact on public services. Therefore, an effective workplace learning strategy is needed to improve their understanding of the dynamics and tasks of the bureaucracy. Based on the Government Competitiveness Index figures in 2022, Indonesia only managed to rank 73 out of 214 which measured government effectiveness with a score of 66.04. In addition, the low literacy culture of ASNs is a serious obstacle to developing their capacity. Low literacy can hinder understanding of regulations, policies, and work procedures, which can ultimately reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of the bureaucracy. Therefore, strategic steps need to be taken to improve the culture of literacy among ASNs through a comprehensive learning approach. The low spirit of collaboration is also a challenge in itself. Good collaboration between ASN can

increase productivity and innovation in the provision of public services. Therefore, it is necessary to apply learning methods that can stimulate the spirit of collaboration among ASNs, build networks, and strengthen internal communication.

According to Fitria, Suryanto and Mashuri (2022), the problem of ASN competency development tends to receive less attention from government agencies towards the systematic implementation of ASN competency development. This can be seen from the absence of adequate competency development planning documents, but rather competency development is carried out incidentally, and employees are included only as a condition for participating in the program. These problems certainly require an adaptive solution and if possible a tailor-made one that will make it easier for the ASN.

Significance of The Study

Competency development for ASNs with a conventional approach through structured learning is considered outdated and expensive. Special strategies are needed to increase the number of competency development for ASN in Indonesia. As a form of implementing the mandate of the ASN Law, optimization of social learning needs to be implemented. Adopting the theory of Lombardo and Eichinger, creative solutions need to be made to accommodate the current ASN learning process which tends to be tailor-made. Social learning is a learning process that shows connecting and feedback such as buddying, coaching, and mentoring. This social learning method can be the gateway to solving one of the problems of ASN competency development in Indonesia.

The breakthrough made by the author was to adopt from the internship place, namely at Hana Bank with the main idea of the action plan for change that the author carries, namely the implementation of the buddy program and the results of the adaptation of the benchmarking locus are the creation of clear guidelines from upstream to downstream, with the involvement of all parties who are possible to be involved in the action of change in the brainstorming process so that it will produce an efficient work process in the future.

There is no government agency that has officially introduced a buddy program in mentoring competency development for its employees, so this is a gap for the author to explore and try to create a pilot project in the author's working unit together with an effective team that is young and enthusiastic about welcoming changes for the better performance.

Research Questions

Referring to the background that has been explained, the main question that arises and is attempted to be answered through this study is whether the buddy program for ASN can become a grassroots movement in ASN that helps realize the making of a world-class Indonesian government.

Methods

Research Approach Perspective

Qualitative research methods are easier to adapt to field conditions, are more sensitive to changes in patterns/values and even data in the field (Moleong, 2002). Then, to sharpen the picture of the phenomenon under study, direct interpretation of the phenomenon/incident gets a high priority in qualitative research than in the interpretation of data measurements. Theory in qualitative research is not intended solely to be proven (verification), but can be developed based on the data collected (falsification). This qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior (Moleong, 2002).

Research Focus

This research is a study that discusses the implementation of the buddy program as a grassroots movement in ASN that helps realize the making of a world-class Indonesian government. The locus of the observation is on the Deputy of ASN Competency Development Policies working unit.

Types and Sources of Data

The types of data collected are primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from empirical study through experiencing the buddy program that was implemented in the working unit and direct interviews by the author to informants, and secondary data were obtained from the results of documentation and text analysis.

Data Collection

During the piloting of the buddy program, several important pieces of information were collected by the time of the implementation of the program. The information gathered from informants who were the people who know or actors who are directly involved with the research problem, either their knowledge or involvement with the problem. The number of informants needed in qualitative research cannot be determined, the research process takes place from one informant to another. However, in the end, the number of research informants were 20 informants consisting of the ASNs who work as Deputy of ASN Competency Development Policies.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face. Based on information from informants, the author develops research into other informants, and so on until the research is deemed sufficient to obtain the information needed. This kind of process is analogous to the process of snowballing. The research instrument used is the author as the main instrument equipped with documentation, interviews, and observations.

Documentation is any material that is written or unwritten, whether prepared for research, testing an event, or not prepared for research (Moleong, 2002). Documents as data sources can be used to analyze, interpret and even predict. The documents that will be used in this research can come from any source, as long as they relate to policies, for example, statistical documents, documents in the form of archives, reports to related government agencies, and also come from analyzes or research reports from previous researchers who conducted studies with the object which are relatively related.

In-depth interview technique will be used primarily to construct activities and events surrounding this policy, as well as to verify and expand data/information that has been previously obtained. The interview technique used is to use an interview guide (Patton, 1980), where the interview guide only contains an outline of the process and its contents so that the points and what is planned can be maintained (Moleong, 2002).

The interview was carried out in delivering the questionnaire. Semi-structured interviewing, which is a more flexible version of the structured interview because it "allows depth to be achieved by giving the interviewer the opportunity to investigate and broaden the interviewee's responses" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

As stated by Grootaert, Narayan, Jones, and Woolcock (2004) also Bolderston (2012) the advantages of the interview include that the interviewee can express their views, personally, without the framework imposed by the researcher. That will help cover all relevant areas (ie research questions). The advantage of such a checklist, as Berg considers, is that it "allows to investigate in depth while allowing the interviewer to keep the interview within the parameters tracked by the research objectives" (Berg in Alshenqeeti, 2014).

Those who became informants included high-ranking officials at the policy-making level and government officials at the implementing level as well as other communities, whether program recipients or not.

Literature Review

Competency Development

Competency management is an efficient method that is frequently used in businesses for choosing, categorizing, and evaluating people as well as for managing their careers, growing them, and evaluating their performance, according to Heinsman in Wong (2020). The development of competencies for a particular work area or job position within an organization, according to Ellström and Kock in Wong (2020), may have a number of positive effects on HRM practices in the areas of hiring, promotion (e.g., career planning), and talent mobility (internal and/or external); talent education or training, for example, through internal or external programs; and planned changes of tasks or work organization through various measures (e.g., job development, job rotation, team organization) with the goal of advancing informal learning in the workplace.

According to De Vos, De Hauw & Van der Heijden (2011), workers' opinions of their employability are favorably correlated with their involvement in competency development programs and their view of the support they receive. The imperative need for ASN competency development stems from the need to enhance their professionalism and performance when performing public service obligations. According to the UU ASN, bureaucrats must acquire competencies. Furthermore, as specified in each agency's annual work budget plan, every government agency must create an annual competency development plan. For this reason, improving ASN expertise must be the top priority in order to provide better and more effective public services.

The goal of staff development, according to Bariqi in Maulana, Silitonga, and Asropi (2023), is to improve workers' efficacy and efficiency in carrying out and accomplishing organizational or program goals. A number of changes, including those in apparatus knowledge, apparatus abilities, and apparatus attitudes about their responsibilities, will arise from increasing apparatus competence.

Because competency will lead to productivity, competency development will be a tactic in the new paradigm of competency-based human resource development. Because it clarifies what is required to carry out tasks and activities for the greatest outcomes in the field of education, competency is incredibly helpful (Cahyana, 2010).

Grassroot movement

Despite being used frequently, the term "grassroot" lacks a broadly accepted definition. Generally speaking, "grassroots" refers to something popular and widely accepted, almost

ubiquitous. Being grassroots refers to not having any restrictive political affiliations and to being answerable only to their own group of people (Kaplan, 2016).

According to Smith, Fressoli & Thomas (2014), grassroots innovations rarely feature in the foresight exercises and innovation policies of formal scientific, technology and innovation communities. Mainstream innovation policies focus upon rent seeking firms developing new products, processes and services in conventional (globalizing) markets. Good practice in innovation policy is considered to nurture partnerships between firms and science and technology institutes, fosters entrepreneurship, and incentivises investment in innovation activities.

Grassroots innovation activities and challenges generate knowledge highly relevant to policy for sustainable innovation. Grassroots innovation movements nevertheless constitute innovative spaces that can enhance the plurality and reflexivity of innovation policy (Smith, Fressoli & Thomas, 2014). Grassroots innovation processes share a broadly similar vision and shared set of principles, regarding local inclusion and control in processes of technology development and innovative social movement. Shared principles suggest all grassroots innovation movements confront similar fundamental challenges, even though manifesting in particular ways in contrasting settings (Smith, Fressoli & Thomas, 2014).

Buddy Program

Several theories that are the basic principles of implementing the Buddy Program can be seen through theories related to peer learning. As explained by Williams (2006), peer learning schemes allow new employees in the organization to develop professional relationships that are also informal. This theory reflects a number of basic concepts and principles in the Buddy Program, which can be further explored through several theories as follows:

Williams' theory highlights the importance of social interaction between individuals in the organization, especially between new employees and leaders or more experienced colleagues. Peer learning utilizes the dynamics of these social relationships to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience.

The fact that peer learning schemes are very popular in various sectors of work shows that this approach is recommended and supported by Human Resources (HR) practitioners. This reflects the recognition of the effectiveness of peer learning in supporting the integration and development of individuals in the work environment (CIPD, 2009).

According to Loveland in Nalband, Jadhav, and Salunke (2017), Disney's Buddy Program is designed to assist Cast Members in settling into their new roles more quickly. It offers a single point of contact for inquiries on the business, its culture, its practices, and its policies. It also offer

assistances, counsel, and motivation to those who are new. Many businesses employ this buddy system, and Rigby in Nalband, Jadhav & Salunke (2017) lists industry leaders including Google and Innocent as well as other consulting firms like Penna that promote buddy systems in onboarding procedures. There will be fewer issues when the buddy program is put into place that are too small to worry the team leader about and could be handled by the peer group (Gogate and Pandey, 2015).

The view of Nigah, Davis, and Hurrell (2012) suggests that peer learning can act as a socialization strategy that can create positive work attitudes. This shows that through informal interaction and learning between colleagues, employees can adapt more easily to the organizational culture and develop positive work attitudes. Other theories also describe that peer learning allows employees to work on new concepts and share ideas with colleagues who are working on similar projects. This creates an environment where employees can learn from each other and enrich their understanding through collaboration (Gupta, 2022). The author developed the Buddy program for ASN after conducting studies and internships directly at Hana Bank. The buddy program has become a precise solution for developing employee competencies at Hana Bank with cost efficiency and a very high impact on employee performance. The Buddy Program further facilitates new employee adaptation to the job and workplace to increase collaboration among employees. This program includes office tours, introduction to senior levels, teams, and related divisions.

Peer tutoring has been a powerful pedagogy for writing center teaching and student learning. The buddy program has proven to be an effective teaching strategy for writing centers that promotes student learning (Carino, 2023). The theory also emphasizes that the opportunity to teach and be taught by each other is an effective way for organizations to grow stronger employees and work together productively. This highlights the importance of collaboration and knowledge exchange in the context of peer learning.

Overall, the peer learning theory as explained by Williams and supported by other scholars suggests that this approach makes a significant contribution to new employee adjustment, workplace learning, and the development of positive work attitudes.

World-Class Government

According to Zukyani in Iswanto and Putra (2023), to achieve the reform's objective of building a top-tier bureaucracy, the HR apparatus must be improved. professionalism, honesty, public orientation, excellent service culture, and global insight are the minimum requirements for a world-class ASN. In order to fulfill the requirements of qualified ASNs and achieve good

governance in Indonesia, all ASNs must consistently fulfill these five criteria (Dwiyanto dalam Iswanto dan Putra, 2022).

Supratman (2018) found that the definition of "world-class" in the Cambridge Dictionary is "the best in the world" for a person, thing, or category. When compared to all the identical products that come from anyplace in the world, this best recognition relates to the establishment of quality standards in terms of design, performance, quality, customer satisfaction, and value. As a result, a government that ranks highest among all nations in the globe might be said to have world-class qualities.

Growing dedication and preserving consistency are the first two elements in creating a strong, world-class bureaucratic work culture that will lead to success, according to Robbin, who was cited by Supriatna (2017). When an individual can recognize himself as a member of the organization, it is considered that he has a very strong commitment to the bureaucracy.

Implementation of The Buddy Program For ASN

Locus Information

The Deputy for ASN Competency Development Policy is a compartment that carries out the task of preparing the formulation of ASN Competency Development program development policies and quality assurance. The Deputy for ASN Competency Development Policy is known as an agile compartment with a very diverse and even composition of employees. This can be seen from the age range, education level, and background of employees who are very heterogeneous. Therefore, this compartment will be a suitable pilot project locus and in accordance with its duties and functions, namely the preparation of policies which if this activity goes well, can be implemented massively.

Scopes

The determination of the scope of the Buddy Program is identified through the SMART Strategy, namely:

Specific:

Determine the objectives of the Buddy Program, including the competency areas to be improved, specific competency development topics, and desired competency development targets. For example, improving the understanding of ASN in the Deputy for ASN Competency Development Policy environment regarding bureaucratic regulations and improving collaboration skills.

Measurable:

Prepare measurable performance indicators to evaluate the achievement of Buddy Program objectives. For example, how much and how effective the Buddy Program is as a medium for social movement learning with coworkers.

Achievable:

Determine realistic and achievable targets for buddies and mates in the Buddy Program. This involves adjusting to the level of understanding and needs of buddies and mates to achieve significant capacity improvements within a predetermined time frame.

Relevant:

Ensuring that the objectives of the Buddy Program are directly related to the needs and challenges faced by ASNs in the work environment. The Buddy Program becomes relevant to the daily tasks and responsibilities of buddies and mates, thus providing real added value to provide optimal input for the implementation of coaching or superior-subordinate work dialogue for the mentoring implementation process.

Time-Bound:

Set a specific period to achieve the goals of the buddy program. For example, determining that the program will last for 3 (three) months with monthly progress evaluations and achieving certain targets at the end of the period for the general Buddy Program category. Meanwhile, for the Buddy Program process for specific categories, the program time will take place according to needs with evaluation of certain targets at the end of the period.

By applying the SMART principle in determining the scope, the Buddy Program can be implemented as an effective social movement learning and experiential learning media. In this context, the Buddy Program can be integrated into coaching and mentoring as a booster to strengthen the understanding and application of concepts needed by the mate. The existence of a certain period provides focus and encouragement to achieve the desired results efficiently. This Buddy Program can also be measured objectively through periodic evaluations to ensure the success of the program implementation.

Buddy Program Mechanism*Definition of Buddy and Mate*

A Buddy is an ASN who has the competence to act as a discussion partner, advisor, or counselor for Mate who needs competency development support. In carrying out their role, ASNs who become Buddy are assigned by the leadership in the Deputy for ASN Competency Development Policy. The other side, a Mate is an ASN who needs competency development from a Buddy figure who can position themselves as a discussion partner, advisor, or counselor who has competence

in a particular field. Mate can rely on a buddy to help with the work completion process and resolve technical challenges and problems of the work faced. Mate does not have special criteria because mate is a learner figure who needs competency development that comes from a buddy.

Buddy Criteria

Some of the minimum criteria that a buddy must have are as follows:

- Have expertise/competence related to the field of work as proven by certain evidence.
- Have work experience in a particular field for at least 3 (three) years.
- Have good interpersonal communication skills.
- Have a high passion for competency development.

Other minimum criteria that must be possessed by a buddy will be adjusted in the next series of guidelines referring to the results of monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Buddy Program.

Submission of Program

The submission of the implementation of the Buddy Program can be based on 2 (two) things, namely:

- Personal motivation or desire of the Mate to obtain competency development; and
- Leadership direction based on the fulfillment of the needs of completing tasks in the Deputy for ASN Competency Development Policy environment.

Type and Time of Implementation

The type and time of implementation of the Buddy Program can be based on 2 (two) things, namely:

- Based on Time: The implementation of the Buddy Program in this type tends to be in the form of general competency development assistance. For example, orientation for new employees who need general information related to the organization and business processes in the work environment. The implementation of the Buddy Program with this method can be carried out for a maximum of 3 months.
- Based on Project: The implementation of the Buddy Program in this type tends to be in the form of specific competency development assistance. Some examples of the implementation of the Buddy Program by Project are such as knowledge transfer on the use of Orange Analysis Tools in research methodology, sharing information related to the Accreditation of Training Institutions policy, use of the Srikandi correspondence application, and so on. The implementation of the Buddy Program using this method can be done without minimum or maximum time.

What-to-do?

During the buddying process, the things that are carried out are knowledge sharing by buddies to mates through delivering materials, solving problems by optimizing self-potential, transferring skills in certain fields through simulations, and carrying out certain tasks until the buddy process reviews the results of the mate's work in certain fields that have been taught previously. The form of Buddy Program activities refers to one form of organizing non-classical competency development and is integrated with other forms of competency development as stated in the NIPA Regulation Number 10 of 2018 concerning the Development of Civil Servant Competencies.

Leaders' Approval

As a form of accountability for the implementation of the Buddy Program, leadership approval is needed so that the competency development process in the organization can be properly monitored by the leadership. The leadership can provide approval for the implementation of the Buddy Program verbally so that the implementation process can be more efficient. After the Buddy Program is implemented, the leadership will review the implementation results to support the achievement of organizational goals and the work process in the Deputy for ASN Competency Development Policy can run well.

Code of Ethics for Implementation

The implementation of the Buddy Program refers to the ASN code of ethics as stated in Government Regulation Number 42 of 2004 concerning the Development of the Corps Spirit and the Civil Servant Code of Ethics. Buddy and Mate who carry out the buddying process are required to always refer to the code of ethics as a form of guidance for attitudes, behavior, and actions in carrying out tasks and daily life interactions. This aims to encourage buddy and mate to be critical and rational in making decisions autonomously. For the Deputy for ASN Competency Development Policy, the implementation of this code of ethics can be useful as an early warning system and maintain an organizational climate so that buddy and mate can behave ethically. In addition, the implementation of the Buddy Program must be in accordance with the ASN Core Values, consisting of Service-Oriented, Accountable, Competent, Harmonious, Loyal, Adaptive, and Collaborative.

Recognition and Evaluation of Implementation

As a form of appreciation or recognition for the implementation of the Buddy Program, each buddy and mate will provide a testimonial or thank you card. This recognition is expected to be a form of appreciation and encouragement for the buddy as an ASN who has competence in his/her field of work and has a high passion for sharing and improving competency development in his/her work environment. For the mate, this recognition is a form of appreciation for the desire

of ASN to always be a learner so that improving his/her competence has a positive impact on the organization. As a long-life learner, the mate is a good example that ASN can always be adaptive to always learn anywhere, anytime, and with anyone.

The leader has the authority to review the implementation of the Buddy Program for employees and make the process or results of this program a form of follow-up to the mentoring process or superior-subordinate work dialogue.

The communication strategy is carried out with an informal approach but with a measurable substance-strengthening strategy. In this case, the author tries to adjust the target audience which is the object. For example, one of the socialization processes is carried out in a relaxed manner and does not use a rigid meeting mechanism in general. Sharing is carried out while enjoying snacks together (Pizza Time). However, there is a special time to deliver a briefing to senior employees who have a lot of experience and provide clues to what aspects need to be conveyed. In addition, conventional communication mechanisms through socialization and Visual Management Boards are also always encouraged. To a wider range of netizens, the delivery mechanism uses short Instagram Reels videos.

Evaluation

The implementation of the Buddy Program for ASNs as a learning medium for social learning with peers and as a booster for the Coaching and Mentoring program during a specified period has provided great benefits in the form of producing competent and high-performing ASNs and ASNs who are not allergic to collaboration.

In accordance with the initial objective, this Buddy Program is expected to be an initial step that is small in nature but has a big impact, namely producing competent and high-performing World Class Civil Servants, realizing ASN who have the desire to collaborate and promote superior-subordinate performance dialogue activities through coaching and mentoring programs so that bureaucratic organizations become adaptive and agile organizations with relevant problem solutions.

Interview results from the informants involved seemed very satisfying. Almost all buddies and mates involved considered this process very beneficial for them personally and also efficient in carrying out their duties in their work units. There were several informants who had not been involved but seemed interested in implementing it immediately. The obstacle encountered was age constraints. As many as 15% of employees were over 50 years old and were less familiar with using the application system in the process of documenting buddy program activities.

From the aspect of economic valuation, the implementation of this buddy program certainly has a very positive impact on the work unit. With initial data that each employee gets the right to a learning wallet of Rp 500,000 per person, if it is assumed that with that amount of money, employees can participate in competency development activities 2 times, then the total cost required by the Deputy is Rp 17,500,000 per year. Meanwhile, looking at the buddy program implementation project that allows each employee to become a learning mate 2 times in 1 month by different buddies, then the total cost that can be saved in 1 year for a total of 35 employees is Rp 192,500,000.

Conclusion

Competency development for State Civil Apparatus (ASN) has a very important urgency in improving their performance and professionalism in carrying out public service duties. Based on the provisions of the ASN Law, bureaucrats are obliged to develop competencies. In addition, each government agency is required to prepare an annual competency development plan which is stated in the annual work budget plan of each agency. Therefore, ASN competency development must be a primary concern to ensure better and more efficient public services.

In the private sector, the implementation of a buddy program can be one of the programs that has succeeded in increasing employee engagement and developing employee competencies in parallel. Both those who become buddies and those who receive buddy facilities (mates). The implementation of the Buddy Program in the bureaucracy certainly is something new and challenging.

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