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Restructuring the Governance of PUSSAKO FH-UHO: Building a Progressive, Accountable, and Innovative Research Institution

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Abstract. Limited access to justice and suboptimal governance of legal research institutions at universities often hinder the fulfillment of the public's constitutional rights, particularly in addressing critical issues in Kendari City such as agrarian conflicts and low legal literacy. This community service initiative aims to reconstruct the governance of PUSSAKO FH-UHO to transform it into a progressive, accountable, and innovative research institution. The method employed is Participatory Organizational Empowerment, which includes stages of internal audit, Focus Group Discussions, and capacity-building workshops based on a progressive legal paradigm. The results of the community service initiative demonstrate significant transformation in the organizational structure, which is now more responsive and accountable in addressing legal issues in Kendari City. Key findings include the institution's success in drafting a policy on land data protection, as well as the enhancement of advocacy and constitutional literacy programs for marginalized communities. This demonstrates that strengthening the internal governance of the study center can bridge the gap between formal regulations and the community's need for substantive justice. In conclusion, the restructuring of PUSSAKO FH-UHO's governance has strategic implications for public policy practices through the provision of more inclusive legal recommendations and the strengthening of access to social justice. Transformative research institutions play a vital role as driving forces in realizing a progressive, independent, and sustainable legal culture in the Southeast Sulawesi region.

Keywords: *Accountability, Progressive Law, Kendari City, PUSSAKO FH-UHO, Governance.*

INTRODUCTION

The existence of legal research centers at universities, such as the Center for Law and Constitutional Studies at the Faculty of Law, UHO, plays a vital role in driving the transformation of legal education grounded in social justice. Legal education in Indonesia today is expected to go beyond a purely technical and procedural focus; it must also be capable of addressing the real needs of marginalized communities who are often excluded from the formal legal system (Rosadi & Marwan, 2020). This transformation requires research institutions to restructure their organizational governance to be more inclusive and capable of contributing ideas relevant to evolving social dynamics (Siregar, 2024).

In the city of Kendari, the issue of unequal access to justice remains a dominant topic in the public sphere. People in this area often face structural barriers in obtaining adequate legal assistance, particularly regarding the fulfillment of their constitutional rights. The low level of legal literacy among the local community leaves them in a vulnerable position when facing various legal issues, making the presence of responsive and adaptive research institutions an urgent necessity to bridge this access gap.

One prominent example of a legal issue in Kendari City is agrarian conflict and legal uncertainty regarding land ownership. The loss of land records at the Kendari City Land Office has triggered protracted disputes that have harmed those with constitutional land rights. Furthermore, the practice of informal land transfers with inadequate deed documentation often serves as a source of legal conflict within Kendari society, reflecting the weakness of preventive legal protections and regulatory oversight at the grassroots level.

These legal issues are exacerbated by the fact that the internal governance of research institutions is not yet fully optimized for carrying out policy dissemination and advocacy functions. Awareness of the authority of legal institutions and understanding of the constitution are often still limited to formal academic forums and fail to address the substance of issues at the grassroots level (Aryani et al., 2023). For example, public outreach regarding policies with broad impacts, such as judicial reviews of laws, is often not effectively communicated to affected communities in local areas, resulting in low public participation in safeguarding the constitution (Absori et al., 2021).

Theoretically, the urgency of reconstructing the governance of PUSSAKO FH-UHO aligns with the Progressive Law paradigm. This theory emphasizes that law is an instrument for humanity; therefore, legal institutions must have the courage to undertake structural and cultural reforms to achieve true justice (Siregar, 2024). In the Indonesian context, progressive law demands that research institutions transform from merely normative study centers into driving forces for legal change that are committed to humanity and social justice (Putra & Ahyani, 2022).

From a legal philosophy perspective, this issue of organizational reconstruction is closely tied to the pursuit of substantive justice amidst the constraints of positivist law. Justice must not be viewed merely as compliance with statutory texts but must address the realms of morality and tangible benefits for society (Khalimy et al., 2023). The transformation of PUSSAKO FH-UHO into a progressive and accountable institution is a manifestation of the values of equality before the law, where the research institution serves as a voice for the rights of neglected citizens (Lutfiyah, 2021).

The success of implementing legal aid and community service programs heavily depends on the effectiveness of the organizational governance overseeing them. Without transparent and accountable governance, efforts to fulfill human rights through legal research and advocacy will not be maximized and tend to remain merely ceremonial (Dedihasriadi, 2020). Therefore, capacity building through management innovation and the optimization of understanding regarding local legal dynamics—including local wisdom in Southeast Sulawesi—is key for PUSSAKO FH-UHO to become a truly transformative research institution (Achir & Elfikri, 2022).

Based on this background, this community service activity aims to conduct training and mentoring to reconstruct the governance of PUSSAKO FH-UHO. This training focuses on developing an organizational model that is progressive in legal thinking, accountable in administrative management, and innovative in providing solutions to legal issues in Kendari City. Through this restructuring, it is hoped that PUSSAKO FH-UHO can play an active role in realizing the enforcement of law that is fairer, more transparent, and has a tangible impact on all segments of society.

RESEARCH METHODS

This community service initiative was implemented using a Participatory Organizational Empowerment approach that integrates progressive legal theory with modern research institute management practices. This approach was chosen so that all administrators and members of the study center are actively involved in redefining the institution's strategic direction, ensuring that the resulting transformation is substantive rather than merely administrative (Rosadi &

Marwan, 2020; Siregar, 2024). This method is implemented through three main stages: situation analysis, technical assistance, and governance system evaluation (Qafisheh, 2012).

1. **Situation Analysis and Internal Audit.** In this stage, an in-depth mapping of the organizational structure, work procedures, and the effectiveness of PUSSAKO FH-UHO's programs to date is conducted. Problem identification focuses on the barriers causing the institution's low responsiveness to legal issues in Kendari City, such as agrarian disputes and the protection of constitutional rights. This step is crucial for identifying weaknesses in organizational accountability and innovation that need to be addressed.
2. **Implementation through Focus Group Discussions.** This activity aims to internalize progressive legal values into the organizational culture. During this session, a focused discussion was held regarding the strategic role of the study center in providing solutions to controversial public policies and enhancing constitutional literacy for the general public (Absori et al., 2021; Lisma, 2019). These FGDs are also used to formulate more innovative standard operating procedures that are adaptable to advancements in information technology within the legal field (Wahyuningdyah, 2015).
3. **Capacity Building and Governance Workshop.** Participants receive intensive training on the management of legal research institutions, ranging from policy advocacy techniques to procedures for managing accountable scientific publications (Qafisheh, 2012). The workshop materials were designed to equip the board members with the skills to conduct effective legal outreach grounded in the real needs of local communities in Southeast Sulawesi. This aims to ensure that PUSSAKO does not merely become an "ivory tower" of academia but also serves as a driving force for social justice.
4. **Monitoring and Evaluation.** The success of this governance restructuring is measured through organizational effectiveness assessment tools that cover aspects of transparency, responsiveness to legal issues, and the number of innovative community service programs produced (Dedihariadi, 2020). Evaluations are also conducted to assess the increased legal awareness of the management in implementing human rights principles in every study conducted (Aryani et al., 2023; Gunawan & Hafiz, 2021). The results of these evaluations will form the basis for developing follow-up plans to ensure the sustainability of PUSSAKO FH-UHO as a transformative research institution.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

The restructuring of PUSSAKO FH-UHO's governance has been successfully implemented through a series of stages involving administrators, faculty members, and law students in Kendari. The primary outcome of this initiative demonstrates significant institutional transformation, where the previously rigid and passive organizational structure has shifted to become more dynamic and responsive to contemporary legal issues (Rosadi & Marwan, 2020). Through an internal audit, it was found that the organization's primary challenge had been the lack of student involvement in field studies, which was subsequently addressed by establishing a more inclusive advocacy and constitutional literacy division.

In the context of capacity building, this community service initiative successfully embedded progressive legal values into the institution's standard operating procedures. The findings of the community service initiative highlight that prior to the restructuring, PUSSAKO tended to be confined to normative studies that were detached from the social realities of Kendari's community. Following the mentoring, the institution began adopting a legal perspective that prioritizes humanity and substantive justice, resulting in work programs that are now more focused on providing practical solutions to legal issues in Southeast Sulawesi.

A practical outcome of this service project is the institution's enhanced capacity to address critical issues in Kendari City, such as agrarian conflicts and uncertainty regarding land rights. Through its new division, PUSSAKO FH-UHO successfully drafted a study on legal protection for holders of lost land records, which is a direct response to the phenomenon of land disputes

at the Kendari City Land Office. This demonstrates that the restructuring of governance has transformed PUSSAKO from merely a center for theoretical studies into an institution capable of providing data-driven policy advocacy.

In addition to agrarian issues, this initiative has yielded results in the form of enhanced constitutional literacy programs for the general public. Field findings indicate that residents of Kendari City are often marginalized due to a lack of awareness of their constitutional rights when facing discriminatory public policies (Putra et al., 2023). As a follow-up to the organizational restructuring, PUSSAKO now regularly conducts outreach on the authority of state institutions and monitors judicial reviews of laws relevant to the environmental and social needs of coastal communities in Southeast Sulawesi (Absori et al., 2021; Aryani et al., 2023).

Interpretation of these results indicates that this service is highly relevant for bridging the gap in access to justice, which has long been the primary grievance of marginalized communities in Kendari (Lutfiyah, 2021). With more accountable governance, PUSSAKO FH-UHO is now able to position itself as a “legal clinic” that bridges the gap between the complexity of regulatory language and the real needs of grassroots communities. This transformation confirms that legal research institutions within universities must be able to transcend academic boundaries to engage with sociological realities.



Figure 1. Presentation Of The Material

From a progressive legal perspective, this phenomenon of reconstruction is viewed as an effort to “liberate” legal institutions from the shackles of rigid positivism. The outcomes of this service confirm the theory that law must serve humanity, not the other way around (Siregar, 2024). By establishing a progressive and innovative institution, PUSSAKO FH-UHO has fulfilled the legal function as a tool for social engineering—one that does not merely stand idly by in the face of injustice but actively seeks legal avenues to provide protection for vulnerable groups (Khalimy et al., 2023; Putra & Ahyani, 2022).

The practical implications of this service initiative are the establishment of more transparent and accountable working mechanisms within PUSSAKO. Every study produced now undergoes a rigorous verification process and is accessible to the public, thereby enhancing external stakeholders’ trust in the policy recommendations provided by the institution. This increased accountability is crucial to ensuring that every legal assistance or study provided is truly grounded in the principles of professionalism and academic integrity.

Furthermore, the outcomes of this community service initiative have strengthened students' capacity as future transformative legal practitioners. By directly participating in the management of the new organization, students gain empirical experience in handling real-world legal cases in Kendari City, ranging from mediation support to drafting academic papers. This directly enhances the quality of FH-UHO graduates, who are not only theoretically competent but also sensitive to social justice issues in their region.

The success of this restructuring also fosters stronger synergy between academics and local government in formulating legal policies in Southeast Sulawesi. Findings indicate that local governments must involve PUSSAKO FH-UHO in providing legal input regarding local wisdom and the protection of indigenous communities—aspects previously rarely addressed in formal policies (Achir & Elfikri, 2022). This synergy serves as an indicator of PUSSAKO's success in transforming into an innovative and solution-oriented institution.

As a recommendation, to maintain the quality of the reconstructed organization, there is a need for diversified funding and the continuous strengthening of a digital monitoring system. It is also recommended that PUSSAKO FH-UHO expand its network of cooperation with international legal aid organizations and other constitutional studies centers to enrich research perspectives. The sustainability of this innovation is crucial to ensure that PUSSAKO does not fall back into the stagnant patterns of old governance, but continues to develop as a beacon of justice in Southeast Sulawesi

CONCLUSION

This community service program concluded that the restructuring of PUSSAKO FH-UHO's governance has successfully transformed the research institution into a more progressive, accountable, and innovative entity. The results of the implementation show that a management reorientation focused on the values of social justice has enhanced the organization's responsiveness to various legal issues in Kendari City, such as agrarian disputes and uncertainty regarding land rights. Substantively, changes to the internal structure and the strengthening of the advocacy division's capacity have proven effective in bridging the gap between academic legal theory and the sociological realities of marginalized communities.

The primary contribution of this initiative is the provision of a governance model for a constitutional studies center that is not merely administrative but also serves as a catalyst for access to justice. This community service project offers a new understanding that the effectiveness of preventive legal protection and the fulfillment of citizens' constitutional rights heavily depend on the empowerment of local legal support institutions. Within the context of legal literature in Indonesia, the results of this community service initiative reinforce progressive legal theory, which mandates that the law and its institutions must continually evolve in the service of humanity.

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