

## **The Effectiveness of Communication by Members of the Medan City Council in Absorbing the Aspirations of the Community in Electoral District I of Medan Helvetia Subdistrict**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This research aims to determine and analyze the effectiveness of the recess communication of the Medan City DPRD Members in Medan Helvetia District, as well as identifying supporting and inhibiting factors. The background of this research is based on the Performance Report of the Medan City DPRD which shows that there are still many basic needs and general needs of the community that require attention. The research method uses a descriptive qualitative approach with in -depth interview techniques and observations. The results showed that recess communication took place quite effectively, marked by the direct involvement of DPRD members, the delivery of clear information, and active participation of the community. Supporting factors include the communication media used, the selection of appropriate time, and openness to receive input. The obstacle found is the inaccuracy of the implementation time in several locations. Overall, recess activities are a means of two - way communication that builds closeness and public trust, but requires an increase in time discipline and strengthening the follow -up of aspirations so that the absorption of aspirations is more optimal.*

*Keywords: Communication Effectiveness, Recess DPRD, Public Aspirations*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Communication is an important aspect of human life because it allows us to interact, share information, and understand one another. In government institutions, communication serves as a tool for building relationships and communicating with the community. As representatives of the people, the Regional People's Representative Council or as known as DPRD (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah) has an important role in representing the voice of the people and serving as a forum for channeling community aspirations. Effective communication can help every legislative body in build strong relationships, resolve problems, and achieve common goals.

The welfare of the community is the goal of every local government in terms of social welfare development. One of the activities carried out by DPRD members in performing their duties is the recess. The recess is an activity carried out by DPRD members outside of the session period or outside the parliament building to directly absorb the aspirations of the community in their respective electoral districts. The recess is held three times a year, according to a predetermined schedule. The purpose of recess is for representatives of the people to gain a real understanding of

the situation and conditions of the community and to fight for the needs of their constituents. In practice, DPRD members visit various locations in the sub-districts of their electoral districts, usually facilitated by secretariat staff, party staff, and accompanied by community leaders, sub-district representatives, and relevant government agencies.

The implementation of recess includes several stages, namely:

- a. Socialization and dissemination of information to the public regarding the schedule and location of the recess.
- b. Conducting recess activities: opening, delivery of information by DPRD members, delivery of community aspirations.
- c. Documentation and reporting of the recess results to the DPRD secretariat.

After the activities are carried out, DPRD members will compile a report on the results of the recess, which will then be submitted to the council leadership for further discussion in a session or working meeting with the relevant regional government agencies.

In the performance report of the Medan City DPRD leadership for the 2019-2024 term, every issue faced by communities in various electoral districts shows that many people in Medan still need assistance and that several basic needs need to be improved. The needs that have been conveyed through aspirations to the Medan City government have not been fulfilled, such as social assistance that has not been registered in the Integrated Social Welfare Data, infrastructure in the form of road repairs, drainage, street lighting and others, aspirations and complaints related to health, security and order in the Medan City area.

One example in electoral district I, particularly in Medan Helvetia Subdistrict, is that the aspirations expressed are inseparable from complaints from the community who want simplified administration of civil registration, related to data collection on aid recipients, improvements to roads, drainage, opening of ditches, opening of roads and other infrastructure, then basic needs such as clean water, education, health, order and security, and other social assistance. Through the recess activities, DPRD members are expected to be able to accommodate various inputs from the community, which will then be used as consideration in the formulation of regional policies.

The effectiveness of these recess activities depends on how DPRD members, as representatives of the people, communicate with the community to understand their conditions and absorb their aspirations. According to Hardjana in Denaya (2024), communication can be said to be effective if it includes the following indicators: recipient/user, message content, communication media, message format, message source, and timeliness.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Communication*

According to Colin Cherry, quoted by Ahmad Tamrin Sikumbang (2022: 28), "communication is a process in which various related parties exchange information with the aim of achieving common goals and everything related to the relationship in accordance with expectations." Meanwhile, according to Deddy Mulyana, as quoted by Seneru (2022: 6), "Communication is the process of sharing meaning through verbal and nonverbal behavior carried out by two or more people."

Based on the various definitions of communication presented above, it can be concluded that communication is a process of interaction between parties involved in conveying information with the aim of achieving mutual understanding and common goals. This process can take place through various media, both verbal and nonverbal, with the main purpose of creating harmonious relationships and clear understanding between communicators and communicants.

### B. *Effectiveness of Communication*

Effectiveness refers to the extent to which the message conveyed is successfully understood by the recipient in accordance with the sender's intended meaning. This involves clarity, understanding, and an appropriate response in the communication process. According to Hardjana in Denaya (2024), communication can be said to be effective if it includes the following indicators:

#### 1) Recipient/user

The message recipient is the target of the communication process. The effectiveness of communication can be measured by the accuracy in determining who the message recipient is. Thus, communication is considered effective if the message is actually received by the intended party intended.

#### 2) Message content

Hardjana defines message content as the alignment of communication objectives with the facts and actuality of the information received by the audience. In this case, message content refers to the information presented by the organization to the audience.

#### 3) Communication Media

According to Hardjana, communication media is defined as the media used to convey messages in accordance with the needs and expectations of the sender and receiver of the message.

#### 4) Message Format

The definition of message format according to Hardjana is the compatibility of the format intended by the sender with that understood by the recipient, as seen from the way the information content is presented.

5) Message Source (Source)

The source of the message refers to the clarity of the party conveying the message, where the source must be accountable so that the accuracy of the information conveyed is guaranteed. Thus, the effectiveness of communication is greatly influenced by the credibility, clarity, and reliability of the message source, as these factors will determine the extent to which the recipient can accept and trust the content of the message being communicated.

6) Timing

According to Hardjana, timing means that the message intended for the recipient is delivered at a time that is appropriate to the prevailing conditions and situation.

C. *Recess*

Recess is a term that refers to the activities of legislative members outside of session time. The recess period is the time when DPRD members carry out activities outside the council building, either individually or together, with the aim of visiting their constituencies to gather the aspirations of the community. Recess activities are part of the DPRD's role and function in its efforts to achieve justice and community welfare in various aspects, such as development, governance, social affairs, and the economy.

The recess period is held after the end of the session period, which is three times a year or 14 times during the five-year term of the DPRD. The recess consists of four main stages, namely:

- 1) Consultative Body Meeting on the schedule and location of the recess,
- 2) Presentation of technical details on the implementation by the leadership and secretariat of the DPRD,
- 3) Implementation of the recess period, and
- 4) Meeting to present the recess report. The purpose of the recess is to absorb and follow up on the aspirations of constituents and complaints from the community in order to provide moral and political accountability to constituents in the electoral district as a manifestation of the people's representation in government.

Budiarto (2022) explain that there are four stages in the recess activities carried out by DPRD members, namely:

1) Preparation

The preparation stage includes determining the schedule, location of activities,

target groups, budget allocation, and collecting preliminary data relevant to the area where the recess will be held.

2) Implementation.

At this stage, the recess is carried out by implementing all the plans that have been prepared. Activities generally take place face-to-face, either through small or large group forums, thereby providing a space for DPRD members to interact with the community.

3) Reporting.

The recess reporting stage involves the submission of activity results in written and oral form. These reports serve as a means of administrative communication, accountability, supervision, and control. In addition, reports also play a role in conveying information, supporting decision-making, developing insights, and building cooperation.

4) Follow-up on recess results.

The recess results reported by DPRD members are then followed up by distributing them to the Council's Supporting Organs. Next, the results are brought into the meeting agenda in accordance with the issues being discussed.

*D. Aspirations*

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, aspiration is "a hope or goal for future success." Meanwhile, Hafizd, et al., (2023) state that aspiration is a hope for an achievement that can be pursued so that it can be achieved in the future. Aspiration also means a goal that one wants to realize or achieve in the future. The results of the recess reported by DPRD members were then followed up by distributing them to the Council's Supporting Organs. Furthermore, these results were brought into the meeting agenda in accordance with the issues being discussed.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. According to Chairi in Dewi (2021), qualitative research is conducted in a real (natural) context with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of a phenomenon, both in terms of what happened, the reasons for it, and how the process took place. Furthermore, Sugiyono (2024:9) emphasizes that qualitative methods are used to study objects in their natural conditions, where the researcher acts as a main instrument.

Data collection techniques were carried out using triangulation (combining various techniques and sources), inductive data analysis, and the research results

emphasized meaning rather than mere generalization. The type of data used in this study is qualitative data, which is descriptive in nature. According to Bogdan and Biklen in Sugiyono (2020:7), descriptive qualitative research focuses on collecting data in the form of narratives, words, and visuals, rather than numbers. The collected data is then analyzed and described in a way that makes the research results easier for readers to understand comprehensively. In this study, two data sources were used, namely primary and secondary sources.

The data collection techniques used in this study were observation, interviews, and documentation. The data sources in this study are primary and secondary data, where primary data is data obtained directly from the research object. In the context of this study, primary data will be obtained through interviews with research informants, namely a member of the Medan City DPRD Electoral District I, Medan Helvetia Subdistrict, and the community of Medan Helvetia Subdistrict. Secondary data will be obtained by the researcher from the performance reports of the DPRD leadership, as well as by conducting online data searches related to the research topic. The location of this research is at the Secretariat Office of the Medan City DPRD and Electoral District I, Medan Helvetia.

#### **IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Recess is an activity carried out by DPRD members outside of session periods or when performing duties outside the parliament building to directly absorb the aspirations of the community in their respective constituencies. Recess activities are held three times a year, in accordance with a predetermined schedule. The purpose of recess is for representatives of the people to gain a real understanding of the situation and conditions of the community and to fight for the needs of their constituents.

In practice, DPRD members visit various locations in the sub-districts of their electoral districts, usually facilitated by secretariat staff, party staff, and accompanied by community leaders, sub-district representatives, and relevant government agencies. The recess includes several stages, namely:

- 1) Socialization and dissemination of information to the public regarding the schedule and location of the recess.
- 2) Conducting recess activities: opening, delivery of information by DPRD members, and delivery of community aspirations.
- 3) Documentation and reporting of the recess results to the DPRD secretariat.

After the activities are carried out, DPRD members will compile a report on the results of the recess, which will then be submitted to the council leadership for further discussion. in hearings or working meetings with relevant regional

government agencies.

The effectiveness of these recess activities depends on how DPRD members, as representatives of the people, communicate with their constituents to understand the conditions of their communities and absorb the aspirations that are needed. According to Hardjana in Denaya (2024), communication can be considered effective if it includes the following indicators: Recipient/User, Message Content, Communication Medium, Message Format, Message Source, and Timeliness.

#### *A. Recipient/User*

Based on the results of an interview with a member of the Medan City DPRD from Electoral District I, as well as the response of the community in Medan Helvetia District, can conclude that communication in recess activities on the recipient/user indicator tends to be quite effective. This can be seen from the systematic efforts of council members to reach out to those who are the main targets of communication, namely the communities in their respective constituencies.

The recess activities showed that communication was effective in reaching the main target, namely the community in the electoral district. Face-to-face meetings enabled two-way communication, where DPRD members could hear directly the aspirations and complaints of the community, while the community felt they had a space to convey the issues they faced. Invitations were distributed in a structured manner through DPRD staff, party officials, and village officials, so that information could reach the communities targeted by the activities.

However, this effectiveness still has limitations, mainly due to the uneven distribution of invitations and limited venue capacity. This means that not all members of the community are aware of or able to attend recess activities. Some residents believe that the activities are indeed open to the public, but participation still depends on receiving an invitation. Dependence on physical invitations is also a challenge, as people who do not receive invitations are often unaware of the activity schedule.

Overall, the recess activities have been quite effective in absorbing the aspirations of the community. DPRD members have succeeded in establishing targeted communication with target groups, although efforts are needed to expand the reach and increase information transparency so that community participation becomes more equitable and the results of absorbing aspirations become more representative.

#### *B. Message Content*

The messages conveyed during the recess of the Medan City Council Electoral District I Medan Helvetia Subdistrict reflect the various real issues

faced by the community. The aspirations conveyed include problems of flooding due to clogged drainage, infrastructure improvements such as roads and public street lighting, waste management, social assistance, administrative services for residents, and environmental safety issues. This aligns with the statement made by DPRD members that community aspirations are generally divided into two broad categories, namely social and physical, and are often accompanied by a lack of information among the community regarding government assistance procedures.

During the recess, DPRD members not only received feedback but also sought to provide immediate solutions on the spot, such as directing eligible members of the community to immediately register for social assistance by involving the relevant village officials or agencies. However, for certain issues such as clean water, which falls under provincial authority, DPRD members conveyed their limitations. These efforts demonstrate that the messages conveyed and received in the recess forum are two-way: the community expresses complaints and needs, while DPRD members respond with clarifications, explanations of procedures, or follow-up actions in accordance with their authority.

Interviews with community members confirmed that their aspirations were generally accommodated and taken into consideration, although they had not yet been fully realized. Some aspirations, such as partial drainage improvements and security measures, had been implemented, while others were still in progress or had not yet been realized. This variation in the level of realization indicated that resource constraints and bureaucratic processes had affected the follow-up on aspirations.

From the perspective of effective communication, the content of the messages conveyed during this recess period fulfils the elements of relevance and factuality, as it directly reflects the conditions and needs of the community on the ground. The aspirations expressed serve as key input for DPRD members in formulating the main points that will be brought to the plenary session. This process directly connects the voice of the community with the decision-making mechanisms in local government. Thus, the objective of the recess as a means of absorbing aspirations and conveying information can be said to have been achieved, although its full effectiveness is still influenced by factors such as program implementation and inter-agency authority.

### *C. Communication Media*

During the recess of the Medan City Council Electoral District I in Medan Helvetia Subdistrict, the communication media used prioritized face-to-face



meetings between council members and the community. This forum served as the primary means of gathering public input, as it facilitated open two-way interaction, enabling the community to voice their complaints and suggestions both verbally and in writing. Invitations to the event were formally distributed through the DPRD Secretariat and supported by the party leadership network and field staff to ensure that the information reached the intended recipients.

In addition to face-to-face media, communication is also strengthened through social media, which is used to share documentation of activities, convey further information, and maintain connections with communities outside of official forums. This makes it easier for residents who are not present to stay informed about the activities and aspirations being discussed. However, limitations of space and time mean that the conveyance of aspirations is often done through a representative system, in which community representatives convey the aspirations of their groups.

The combination of formal and digital media shows that communication during recess is designed to reach a wide audience while maintaining closeness through direct interaction. This approach is in line with the principles of effective communication because the media used is tailored to the characteristics of the audience, facilitates clear information exchange, and strengthens the relationship between representatives and their constituents.

#### *e. Message Format*

The format of messages in effective communication refers to the way messages are structured and delivered so that they are easy to understand and appropriate for the recipient (Lumbantoruan, 2023). Various delivery methods are used to reach all participants optimally. During the recess in the Medan Helvetia District, the message format was structured systematically so that the activities ran smoothly and the aspirations of the community could be conveyed clearly. The event began with the singing of the national anthem Indonesia Raya, a prayer, and remarks from members of the Regional Representative Council and government representatives. After that, question and answer session was opened with the participation of the community and support from relevant agencies, so that the process of conveying aspirations took place in a dialogical manner.

In addition to verbal forums, a written format is also provided through a special sheet for collecting feedback. This mechanism was used to anticipate limitations in time and capacity of the forum, while also providing space for residents who are reluctant or shy to express their opinions directly. Several community representatives who were present were selected to convey their aspirations verbally, while written aspirations were recorded by the committee and the support team.

According to the community, conveying aspirations during recess can be done easily, either directly in forums or through writing. This combination of formats helps ensure that all input is recorded, including from those who do not speak in front of the forum. Thus, the message format used not only facilitates two-way communication, but also ensures the accessibility and representation of the community's aspirations as a whole.

#### *F. Message Source*

Research results show that the effectiveness of communication during recess is greatly influenced by the credibility of the message source. In this context, DPRD members play a direct role as the main communicators who convey information and accommodate the aspirations of the community. The presence of Mr. Renville Pandapotan Napitupulu, S.T. directly at the recess forum provides clarity and legitimacy to the communication process, so that the messages conveyed are more easily accepted and trusted.

Based on interviews, the community believes that their aspirations during the recess were listened to carefully, responded to directly, and given clear explanations- for example, regarding scholarship assistance procedures or technical solutions to environmental problems. However, some members of the community also acknowledged that not all aspirations could be fulfilled, either due to budgetary constraints or limitations in authority. Nevertheless, the open attitude of DPRD members in receiving input, formally accommodating it, and conveying it to the city government ensured that communication remained effective.

Thus, it can be concluded that from the perspective of the source of the message, communication during recess was quite effective. The credibility of DPRD members as liaisons between the aspirations of the community and the government was a key factor in maintaining public trust, even though the realization of these aspirations still required time and a longer policy process.

#### *G. Timeliness*

Timeliness is one of the important elements in communication that Effective. In the context of the recess activities of Medan City DPRD members in Electoral District I of Medan Helvetia Subdistrict, the timing of the events is designed so as not to interfere with community activities, usually scheduled at relatively free times such as late morning or afternoon. The aim is to give the community the opportunity to attend without having to leave their main obligations or jobs. From a planning perspective, the timing of recess activities is generally considered appropriate and conducive for the majority of the community. The duration of the activities is also considered efficient, which supports more active

and enthusiastic participation from the community.

However, in practice, there are still several obstacles related to punctuality. Differences between the scheduled time and the arrival time of the organizers sometimes occur, causing inconvenience to some participants. This lack of punctuality can reduce public trust in the event organizers and disrupt the smooth flow of communication.

Therefore, even though the timing of recess activities has been arranged to suit the availability of the community, its implementation still needs to be improved, especially in terms of time discipline. Punctuality and consistency are crucial to successful communication and reflect the professionalism of the organizers in establishing relationships with the public.

## V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, communication carried out by members of the Medan City DPRD Electoral District I Medan Helvetia Subdistrict during recess activities showed fairly good effectiveness. DPRD members played a direct role as credible sources of information, conveying information clearly, and collecting and forwarding the aspirations of the community to the city government through official mechanisms such as the main points of discussion in plenary sessions. The communication process involved the community actively, both through the verbal expression of aspirations in recess forums and through explanations and clarifications from DPRD members regarding the issues raised.

The aspirations of the community that were received generally received positive responses, although not all of them could be realized immediately. This was influenced by limitations in authority, priority scales, and bureaucratic processes. Factors supporting effective communication included the direct involvement of DPRD members, the use of easy-to-understand language, the selection of relatively appropriate timing, and openness in receiving input. Meanwhile, obstacles that are still encountered include inaccuracy in the implementation of the predetermined time in some environments when recesses are held.

Overall, recess activities have become an effective means of two-way communication in absorbing public aspirations, building emotional closeness, and increasing public trust. However, this effectiveness can still be improved through better time management during recess, more optimal follow-up, and more varied communication strategies so that the absorption of aspirations can be maximized.

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