

The Role of Humanitarian Organizations in Non-Governmental Public Services in Disaster Management: A Case Study of Action Humanity in Aceh Tamiang

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ABSTRACT

Public services in disaster situations are not only the responsibility of the government, but also involve humanitarian organizations as supporting actors. This study aims to analyze the institutional role of Action Humanity in non-government public services in flood management in Aceh Tamiang and identify the public service model applied. The research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation of organizational administrators, volunteers, and beneficiaries, then analyzed using Robert K. Yin's reference. The results of the study show that the institutional role of Action Humanity is reflected through regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive dimensions. The organization carries out services in a structured manner through needs assessments, coordination with the government and the community, and based on human values, empathy, and social responsibility. In addition, the organization is able to adapt to the social conditions of the community through the involvement of local volunteers. The service model applied is oriented to the needs of the community, participatory, and collaborative. These findings show that humanitarian organizations have a strategic role in supporting public services in disaster situations.

INTRODUCTION

The development of the modern public administration paradigm shows that the implementation of public services is no longer completely dependent on the government (Aprilliyani et al., 2024). The complexity of social, economic, and humanitarian problems has led to the emergence of collaborative governance models involving a wide range of actors, including civil society organizations and humanitarian agencies (Fataruba, 2025). In this context, non-governmental organizations play a role as a complement to public services that are not yet fully accessible to the state.

Public services are essentially a series of activities carried out to meet the needs of the community for goods, services, and administrative services (Resmala et al., n.d.). Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services emphasizes that every citizen has the right to receive quality, fair, and sustainable services. But in practice, the implementation of public services often faces various challenges, especially in emergency conditions that require a quick response and adequate resources (Apriliani et al., 2024).

In disaster situations, limited resources, bureaucracy, and coordination often lead to service gaps. This condition opens up space for humanitarian organizations to provide a quick response in meeting the basic needs of the affected communities. The presence of humanitarian organizations is important, especially in the provision of food assistance, clean water, psychosocial services, and post-disaster recovery support.

Indonesia is one of the countries that has a high level of disaster vulnerability due to diverse geographical, geological, and climatic conditions (Apriliyani et al., 2018). Floods, landslides, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and various other types of disasters often occur in various regions (Dinan et al., 2026). The high frequency of these disasters requires a service system that not only relies on the government, but also involves various elements of society to ensure that the needs of the affected communities can be met quickly and appropriately (Apriliyani & Elfito, 2023).

From the perspective of public administration, the involvement of non-governmental organizations in public service is in line with the New Public Service paradigm which emphasizes the importance of collaboration, community participation, and orientation to the public interest (Safutri, 2023). This paradigm views that public services are shared responsibilities involving the government, communities, the private sector, and civil society organizations (Therasari et al., 2025). Therefore, humanitarian organizations can be seen as one of the strategic actors in supporting the implementation of public services (Sihotang, 2023).

Action Humanity is one of the humanitarian organizations that actively runs non-governmental public services in Indonesia. The organization has formal legality and implements various humanitarian programs in the fields of disaster, social, environmental, and international aid. The various programs carried out show the organization's commitment to helping people facing emergencies and other social needs through a needs-based approach.

One of the interventions carried out by Action Humanity is the handling of floods in Aceh Tamiang Regency. In these activities, the organization carried

out various emergency response programs in the form of food aid distribution, provision of clean water, trauma healing, construction of emergency prayer rooms, and support for communication facilities for affected communities. These programs demonstrate the direct involvement of organizations in meeting the basic needs of the community while supporting the post-disaster recovery process.

Although the role of humanitarian organizations in disaster management is becoming increasingly important, studies of the institutional roles and public service models carried out by non-governmental organizations are still relatively limited. Most previous research has focused more on the role of the government in the implementation of disaster public services. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the institutional role of Action Humanity in the implementation of non-governmental public services and identify public service models applied in flood management in Aceh Tamiang. The results of the research are expected to contribute to the development of public administration studies, especially related to non-government public services and collaborative governance in disaster management.

Unlike previous studies that primarily examine the government's role in disaster public services, this study focuses on the institutional role of humanitarian organizations as providers of non-governmental public services. Furthermore, this research employs Richard Scott's Institutional Theory to analyze the regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive dimensions of Action Humanity and proposes a public service model implemented by humanitarian organizations in disaster management. This constitutes the main novelty and theoretical contribution of this study.

Previous studies have demonstrated that humanitarian organizations play an important role in disaster management through emergency response, logistics distribution, and community empowerment. However, most studies emphasize operational activities or collaborative governance, while limited attention has been given to the institutional legitimacy of humanitarian organizations in delivering non-governmental public services.

Furthermore, previous research rarely applies Richard Scott's Institutional Theory to explain how humanitarian organizations gain regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive legitimacy in disaster management. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by analyzing the institutional role of Action Humanity in providing non-governmental public services during flood management in Aceh Tamiang.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to gain a deep understanding of the role of Action Humanity as a non-governmental humanitarian organization in providing public services in handling flood disasters in Aceh Tamiang. The qualitative approach was chosen because it was able to comprehensively reveal social phenomena based on the perspective of the actors involved, while the case study method allowed researchers to conduct an in-depth study of an organization in a real context (Asysyauki et al., 2026). The

unit of analysis in this study is Action Humanity, with informants selected through purposive sampling techniques, namely Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Head of Program as key informants, volunteers directly involved in flood management as the main informants, and beneficiaries and community leaders in Aceh Tamiang as supporting informants (Sugiyono., n.d.).

The data analysis followed several stages. First, interview recordings were transcribed verbatim. Second, open coding was conducted to identify important statements. Third, similar codes were grouped into themes corresponding to Richard Scott's institutional dimensions. Fourth, findings were interpreted by comparing interview data, observations, and documentation using source and method triangulation. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the recurring patterns identified throughout the analysis process (K.Yin, 2023). The data obtained was then analyzed by organizing, categorizing, and interpreting information based on themes relevant to the research focus so as to produce a complete understanding of the role of Action Humanity in disaster public services. The validity of the data is maintained through source triangulation and triangulation techniques by comparing data obtained from various informants and data collection methods (K.Yin, 2023).

RESEARCH RESULT

The results of the study show that Action Humanity has a significant institutional role in handling flood disasters in Aceh Tamiang through the implementation of structured and community-oriented organizational governance. As a non-governmental humanitarian organization, Action Humanity not only functions as a distribution of aid, but also as an actor that supports the implementation of public services in emergency situations. The involvement of organizations in the process of assessment, coordination, and distribution of aid shows a real contribution in helping communities affected by disasters and supporting the efforts of local governments in disaster management.

This role shows that civil society organizations have the capacity to complement the government's function in providing services to the community in the event of a disaster. In emergency situations, community needs often increase rapidly and require an immediate response (Purnamasari et al., 2024). The presence of Action Humanity is able to strengthen service capacity through the mobilization of resources, volunteers, and partnership networks owned by organizations so that the basic needs of the community can be met more effectively.

In the regulatory dimension, Action Humanity carries out various service activities based on established organizational procedures and mechanisms. Before the program is launched, the organization conducts an assessment of community needs to identify field conditions and determine the type of assistance needed. In addition, coordination is carried out with the Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD), village governments, and local community leaders to ensure that the assistance provided is on target and in accordance with the conditions of the affected communities. The mechanism also

provides institutional legitimacy for organizations in carrying out their humanitarian activities.

The implementation of regulatory mechanisms can show the organization's efforts to maintain program accountability and effectiveness (Purnamasari et al., 2023). By conducting systematic assessments and coordination, Action Humanity can minimize potential errors in aid distribution and ensure that available resources are used in accordance with the community's priority needs. This also shows that the humanitarian services carried out are not purely spontaneous, but are carried out through a careful planning process.

In the normative dimension, the services provided are based on humanitarian values, empathy, social concern, and responsibility for communities affected by disasters. These values serve as guidelines for volunteers and program managers in carrying out their duties in the field. The results of the interviews showed that the volunteers not only focused on distributing logistical assistance, but also tried to provide psychosocial support to the community, especially vulnerable groups who were directly affected by the disaster.

This humanist approach helps build trust and closeness between the organization and the beneficiary community. The trust that is formed into social capital is important in the implementation of humanitarian programs because it facilitates the process of communication, identification of needs, and community involvement in various activities carried out. Thus, the services provided not only solve physical needs, but also provide moral and emotional support for disaster victims.

In the cultural-cognitive dimension, Action Humanity shows the ability to adapt to the social and cultural conditions of the local community. The organization involves local volunteers in various service activities and establishes intensive communication with community leaders and village officials. The involvement of local actors helps organizations understand the characteristics of communities and simplifies the process of implementing programs. In addition, direct interaction with affected residents increases public acceptance of the existence of the organization.

The ability to adapt to the social environment is one of the important factors that support the success of humanitarian programs (Rukmana, 2020). Understanding the values, norms, and habits of the community allows organizations to develop service strategies that are more in line with local conditions. Thus, the assistance provided is not only received physically, but also gains strong social legitimacy from the beneficiary community.

This study also found that the public service model applied by Action Humanity has public-oriented, participatory, and collaborative characteristics. The public orientation can be seen from the implementation of programs based on the results of community needs assessments, such as the distribution of food aid, the provision of clean water, public kitchens, trauma healing, communication facilities, and the support of worship facilities. The participatory aspect is shown through community involvement in the provision of information, distribution of aid, and the implementation of programs in the field.

Meanwhile, the collaborative aspect is reflected in the cooperation built with local governments, village officials, community leaders, and local volunteers.

Overall, the results of the study show that the institutional role of Action Humanity in handling flood disasters in Aceh Tamiang not only contributes to meeting the needs of the affected communities, but also strengthens the implementation of public services in disaster situations. Through the application of regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive aspects that run synergism, organizations are able to build services that are effective, adaptive, and responsive to the needs of the community. These findings underscore the importance of the involvement of humanitarian organizations as strategic partners of the government in realizing more inclusive and sustainable disaster management governance.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study show that the success of non-governmental public services carried out by Action Humanity is not only determined by the organization's resources, but also by the institutional strength it has. The regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive dimensions complement each other in shaping organizational legitimacy. Formal legality, compliance with procedures, and cross-agency coordination strengthen the organization's regulatory legitimacy (Nurdin, 2021). Meanwhile, human values and social responsibility reinforce normative legitimacy, while the ability to understand the culture and conditions of society forms cultural-cognitive legitimacy.

The regulatory dimension can be seen from Action Humanity's ability to carry out humanitarian programs in accordance with organizational mechanisms and applicable regulations. Each activity begins with a needs assessment, coordination with local governments, and the involvement of various relevant stakeholders. The process shows that the organization does not work independently without control, but rather becomes part of a disaster management system that is integrated with government agencies and society.

Compliance with these procedures plays an important role in increasing stakeholder trust. In the institutional context, regulatory legitimacy is obtained when the organization is able to show that the activities carried out are in accordance with applicable rules and norms. With this legitimacy, Action Humanity has gained greater support in the implementation of humanitarian programs in disaster-affected areas.

In the normative dimension, human values are the main foundation in every service activity carried out (Siswadi & Putri, 2024). The values of care, empathy, solidarity, and social responsibility encourage volunteers to provide services that are not only oriented towards meeting material needs, but also paying attention to the psychological and social conditions of the affected communities. These values become a code of conduct that directs all members of the organization in carrying out humanitarian duties.

The normative legitimacy of Action Humanity is reflected in the positive acceptance of the various programs implemented. The community views the organization as an institution that is present to help regardless of certain social,

economic, or group backgrounds (Herdiansah & Randi, 2016). This perception strengthens the relationship between the organization and the community so that the service process can take place more effectively and sustainably.

In the cultural-cognitive dimension, the success of the organization is inseparable from its ability to understand the social and cultural conditions of the local community. The involvement of local volunteers and intensive communication with community leaders helps organizations understand the needs and characteristics of affected communities. This understanding allows the programs to be carried out more in accordance with local conditions and more easily accepted by the community.

Cultural-cognitive legitimacy is formed when people perceive the presence of an organization as something natural, useful, and in accordance with their needs. In this study, the community not only received the assistance provided, but also showed active participation in various activities carried out. This condition shows that the organization has managed to build strong social relationships with the community as beneficiaries.

From the perspective of the New Public Service, the Action Humanity service model shows the characteristics of citizen-oriented public services. The organization does not position the community as an object of assistance, but as a subject who has the need and right to be involved in the service process. This approach can be seen from needs assessments, community involvement, and cross-actor collaboration in disaster management.

The principle of serving citizens which is one of the characteristics of the New Public Service is reflected in various programs that are implemented based on the real needs of the community (Purnamasari et al., 2021). Through a participatory approach, the community is given space to convey needs, provide information, and be involved in the implementation of activities. This approach results in services that are more responsive, inclusive, and in accordance with the conditions of the communities affected by disasters.

In addition, the quick response carried out by Action Humanity through the distribution of around 30 tons of aid, the establishment of a public kitchen with a capacity of about 5,000 servings of food per day, the provision of clean water, trauma healing, and communication facilities show that humanitarian organizations can be strategic actors in filling the gap in public services in emergency situations. These findings reinforce the view that collaboration between governments and humanitarian organizations is an important element in realizing effective, adaptive, and community-oriented disaster management governance.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research shows that Action Humanity has an important institutional role in the implementation of non-governmental public services in handling flood disasters in Aceh Tamiang. The organization not only acts as a distributor of humanitarian aid, but also as an actor that supports the fulfillment of the needs of people affected by disasters through various emergency response programs. The organization's involvement in the needs assessment process, coordination

with various parties, and program implementation shows a real contribution in strengthening service capacity in disaster situations.

Based on the perspective of Richard Scott's institutional theory, the role of Action Humanity is reflected through three institutional dimensions, namely regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive. In the regulatory dimension, the organization runs the program based on clear procedures, coordinates with the government and related stakeholders, and ensures that assistance is distributed according to the needs of the community. In the normative dimension, human values, empathy, and social responsibility are the foundation in the implementation of services. Meanwhile, in the cultural-cognitive dimension, the organization shows the ability to adapt to the social and cultural conditions of the community through the involvement of local volunteers and intensive communication with the local community.

The results of the study also show that the public service model applied by Action Humanity has public-oriented, participatory, and collaborative characteristics. The programs implemented are prepared based on the needs of the community identified through field assessments. In addition, the community is involved in various stages of activities so that they are not only beneficiaries, but also part of the service process. Collaboration built with local governments, village officials, community leaders, and local volunteers also supports the effectiveness of the program's implementation.

The findings of the study show that humanitarian organizations can function as a strategic partner of the government in addressing the gap in public services in emergency situations. The quick response carried out by Action Humanity through the distribution of aid, the provision of clean water, psychosocial services, communication facilities, and the support of worship facilities shows the organization's ability to meet the basic needs of the community quickly and precisely. The presence of the organization helps strengthen the capacity of public services when the government faces limited resources and the high needs of people affected by disasters.

Thus, it can be concluded that Action Humanity's success in handling floods in Aceh Tamiang is not only determined by the availability of organizational resources, but also by the institutional strength it has. The synergy between regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive aspects is able to build organizational legitimacy while producing services that are effective, adaptive, and responsive to the needs of the community.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This research has several limitations that need to be considered. First, the research only focuses on one humanitarian organization, namely Action Humanity, in the context of handling the flood disaster in Aceh Tamiang so that the results of the research cannot be generalized to all humanitarian organizations or other disaster areas. Second, the study uses a qualitative approach with a limited number of informants so that the findings emphasize more on a deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied rather than producing general conclusions. Third, this study only examines the role of institutions and public service models at the emergency response stage so that it

has not studied in depth the contribution of organizations in the post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction stage.

Based on these limitations, further research is recommended to conduct a comparative study between several humanitarian organizations in disaster management to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the non-governmental public service model. In addition, future research can use a mixed methods or quantitative approach to measure the level of effectiveness of services provided to disaster-affected communities. Further research can also examine the role of humanitarian organizations in the post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction stages and explore patterns of collaboration between governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, and communities in realizing more effective and sustainable disaster governance.

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