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**BETWEEN THE RED BRIDGE AND PAPUA'S ECONOMIC
REVIVAL**

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ABSTRACT :

Papua, with its unique culture and abundant natural resources, faces great challenges in economic development and improving the welfare of its people. This article discusses the symbolism of the Red Bridge as an icon connecting development in Papua, and its role in supporting the region's economic revival. The study includes an analysis of infrastructure development efforts, local resource management, and the development of community-based economic potential. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study utilized in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation studies to obtain relevant data. Analysis was conducted using an interactive approach, involving data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and simultaneous conclusion drawing. The results show that the Red Bridge is not only a physical infrastructure, but also a symbol of hope, connectivity, and integration of Papua in the dynamics of national development. This article emphasizes the importance of collaboration between the government, local communities, and the private sector in creating inclusive economic sustainability in Papua, while making the Red Bridge icon an inspiration for the revival of other regions in Indonesia.

Key words: *Red Bridge, Papua, economic development, infrastructure, connectivity.*

INTRODUCTION

Central to a country's economy is economic growth, which is used to measure economic development and human development.¹ The human development index and infrastructure between regions are critical to Indonesia's economic growth. Economic development in Papua faces challenges and hurdles due to its size and diversity.² These include a lack of infrastructure, high construction costs, low population density, and extreme cultural diversity.

In inland areas of Papua, such as the mountains, the economy still relies on agriculture and central government funds to make a living, while economic growth is concentrated in coastal areas. Residents are calling on the government to build infrastructure in Papua to change this. Papua Province consists of 29 districts/cities, including Merauke, Jayawijaya, Jayapura, Nabire, Yapen Islands, Biak Numfor, Puncak Jaya, Paniai, Mimika, Sarmi, Keerom, Pegunungan Bintang, Yahukimo, Tolikara, Waropen, Boven Digoel, Mappi, Asmat, Supiori, Mamberamo Raya,

¹ Muqorrobin, M. (2017). Pengaruh Indeks Pembangunan Manusia (IPM) Terhadap Pertumbuhan Ekonomi Provinsi Jawa Timur. *Jurnal Pendidikan Ekonomi (JUPE)*, 5(3).

² Weya, I., & Lubis, I. (2022, April). Pengaruh Pembangunan Manusia Dan Pembangunan Infrastruktur Terhadap Pertumbuhan Ekonomi Di Provinsi Papua. In *Seminar Nasional Parivisata dan Kewirausahaan (SNPK)* (Vol. 1, pp. 516-527).

Mamberamo Tengah, Yalimo, Lani Jaya, Nduga, Puncak, Dogiyai, Intan Jaya, Deiyai, and City Papua. In 2017-2021, economic growth in the six districts of Papua province has always changed. In 2020, the worldwide economy experienced a sharp decline due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Lani Jaya district experienced the highest growth of 1.78%, followed by Central Mamberamo (0.96%) and Tolikara (0.5%). In 2021, the economy in six districts of Papua province has improved.

Infrastructure development in Papua is often delayed and not in line with plans based on work sequencing. This is due to the ever-changing weather, geographical and topographical conditions in some places, such as different coastal and mountainous areas, problems with materials, and poor security. In addition, difficult land acquisition is an additional problem. This is because land acquisition is a very important matter that requires cultural and sociological approaches with local indigenous leaders.

Papua, with its abundant natural resources and stunning natural beauty, has long been a focus of sustainable development and economic development in Indonesia.³ Papua, with its diverse natural resources, has made this province the belle of the ball.⁴ Papua's tropical forests are home to some of the largest and last remaining tropical forests in the world.⁵ These forests harbor incredible biodiversity, including unique species such as birds of paradise, marsupials such as cassowaries, and a wide variety of medicinal plants.⁶

As the largest and most easternmost province in Indonesia, Papua also faces major challenges in terms of accessibility, connectivity, and adequate infrastructure development. Accessibility, most parts of Papua are still difficult to access due to its difficult geographical conditions, including steep mountains and dense rainforests.⁷ Ground transportation is often limited and constrained by damaged, unconnected, or even non-existent roads in some areas.⁸ In

³ Yanuarti, S. (2016). Kemiskinan dan konflik Papua di tengah sumber daya yang melimpah. *Jurnal Penelitian Politik*, 9(1), 14.

⁴ Rahardja, I. B., Rantawi, A. B., Saputra, H., Sulistiyo, E., Sari, A. M., & Ramadhan, A. I. (2023, November). Inovasi dan Kemajuan Teknologi Bidang Kelapa Sawit Sebagai Kearifan Natural Materials Indonesia. In *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Penelitian LPPM UMJ* (Vol. 1, No. 1).

⁵ DEGEI, A. (2012). *Selamatkan Manusia dan Hutan Papua: Sebuah Kajian Implementasi Penerapan Metode Kualitatif Partisipatory di Wilayah Adat Sarera III*. Absolute Media.

⁶ Wambrau, K. W. (2021). *Analisis Peran Wwf Dalam Upaya Pelestarian Hutan Untuk Mencapai SDG'S Sejak Tahun 2018-2020 di Kampung Sawesuma, Kabupaten Jayapura* (Doctoral dissertation).

⁷ Jacob, D. E., & Sandjaya, S. (2018). Faktor faktor yang mempengaruhi kualitas hidup masyarakat Karubaga district sub district Tolikara propinsi Papua. *Jurnal Nasional Ilmu Kesehatan*, 1(1).

⁸ Entatarina Simanjuntak, S. T., Luhur Selo Baskoro, S. E., ST Aulia, M., Argiono, I., Kom, S., & ST Wahyuningsih, M. (2015). *Pemantauan Pelaksanaan Investasi Infrastruktur Bidang Pekerjaan Umum: Kasus Studi: Lima Provinsi di Indonesia*. Pusat Kajian Strategis Kementerian Pekerjaan Umum.

addition, access to many areas in Papua is often only possible via air or sea transportation.⁹ Air and river transportation are the main means of connectivity between regions in Papua.¹⁰

One of the main infrastructure projects in the spotlight in an effort to improve connectivity and spur economic growth in Papua is the construction of the Red Bridge.¹¹ The Red Bridge is expected to not only connect Jayapura City and Jayapura Regency, but also become a symbol of progress and integration for the people of Papua.¹² The construction of the Red Bridge marks the government's commitment to improving accessibility and connectivity between regions in Papua.¹³ It is hoped that with better infrastructure, economic opportunities will open up more widely for the people of Papua,¹⁴ and enable more efficient and sustainable exploitation of natural resources.¹⁵

The Youtefa Bridge, also called the Red Bridge (JM) by the people of Jayapura, connects Jayapura City, South Jayapura, Muara Tami District, and the Skouw Cross Border Post (PLBN).¹⁶ This is one of the grandest bridges in Papua Province.¹⁷ One of the longest steel arch bridges in Indonesia, the Red Bridge, is located in Jayapura City, Papua Province, over Youtefa Bay. The bridge, built in 2019, shortens the travel distance from Jayapura City to Muara Tami District. Before it was built, traveling from Jayapura City to Muara Tami District took about 1-2 hours, and passing through the Red Bridge took about 12 km and 15-30 minutes.

Tourists and residents of Jayapura City who want to visit the PLBN now do not need to travel two hours as the Red Bridge shortens the distance to twenty minutes.¹⁸ This includes women from Skow Village bringing areca nuts to Youtefa Market and residents from Koya Village bringing their garden produce, such as bananas, corn and yams. The construction of

⁹ Prasetyo, B. (2019). Angkutan Udara Perintis Sebagai Jembatan Udara Menunjang Pertumbuhan Ekonomi Daerah. *Langit Biru: Jurnal Ilmiah Aviasi*, 12(1), 1-10.

¹⁰ Juniati, H. (2017). Analisis pengaruh transportasi multimoda terhadap disparitas harga di propinsi papua baratanalisis pengaruh transportasi multimoda terhadap disparitas harga di propinsi Papua Barat. *Jurnal Transportasi Multimoda*, 15(1), 39-52.

¹¹ [Indonesia.go.id - Jembatan Youtefa, Bukti Sumpah Membangun Papua](https://indonesia.go.id) di akses tanggal 14 Maret 2024 pukul 14:22 WIT.

¹² [Diresmikan Presiden, Jembatan Youtefa Menjadi Simbol Komitmen Untuk Memajukan Papua](#) di akses tanggal 14 Maret 2024 pukul 14:30 WIT.

¹³ [Pembangunan Infrastruktur di Papua: Merajut Konektivitas, Membuka Aksesibilitas | Sekretariat Negara \(setneg.go.id\)](#) di akses tanggal 14 Maret 2024 pukul 14:30 WIT

¹⁴ Sitorus, A. V. Y., & Arsani, A. M. (2018). A comparative study of inter-provincial inclusive economic growth in Indonesia 2010-2015 with approach methods of ADB, WEF, and UNDP. *Jurnal Perencanaan Pembangunan: The Indonesian Journal of Development Planning*, 2(1), 64-77.

¹⁵ Kusuma, N. R., & Ida Hamidah, N. F. (2022). Pengelolaan Sumber Daya Alam Berbasis Ekonomi Hijau Dalam Perspektif Syariah Untuk Mendukung Pembangunan Berkelanjutan Di Indonesia. *Konferensi Nasional Studi Islam (KONASI)*, 1, 142-153.

¹⁶ <https://binamarga.pu.go.id/balai-jayapura/berita/youtefa-bridge-meningkatkan-pertumbuhan-ekonomi-jayapura> di akses pada tanggal 15 Maret 2024 pukul 15:15 WIT.

¹⁷ Balai Pelaksanaan Jalan Nasional Jayapura di akses pada tanggal 15 Maret 2024 pukul 15:15 WIT.

¹⁸ Balai Pelaksanaan Jalan Nasional Jayapura di akses pada tanggal 15 Maret 2024 pukul 15:15 WIT.

recreational facilities and cafes around Jembatan Merah could boost Papua's economy and provide new jobs for residents of Muara Tami District.¹⁹

The communities around the Red Bridge not only benefit from it, but also the people of Keerom Regency. Papua's economic revival is supported by the Red Bridge, which connects Muara Tami district with the center of Jayapura City. Communities in Skouw Village, Holtekamp Village, and Hamadi Village benefit from the presence of this bridge, resulting in improvements in education and income, as well as the opening up of the Red Bridge.

However, while the construction of the Red Bridge promises positive impacts, the project also faces various challenges, ranging from technical and environmental constraints to social and political issues. Therefore, an in-depth understanding of the relationship between infrastructure development such as the Red Bridge and Papua's economic revival is crucial to guide effective and sustainable policies in an effort to realize inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the area. From this background, this research seeks to reveal the relationship between infrastructure development and the economic revival of the Papuan people, with the theme of the discussion "Between the Red Bridge and the Economic Revival of Papua".

Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis. This approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of the relationship between the Red Bridge and Papua's economic revival through a review of various relevant literature sources. This research seeks to be conducted naturally, or as it is to provide objective results. The research aims to understand how the infrastructure affects local social, cultural and economic dynamics, as well as the challenges and opportunities that arise as it develops. The steps taken are as follows:

A. Data Collection

1. In-depth Interviews: Conducted with key stakeholders, including local government, businesses, and communities around the Red Bridge. The interviews focused on their perceptions, experiences and expectations regarding the impact of the infrastructure.
2. Field Observation: Directly observe the economic activities, social interactions, and physical changes around the Red Bridge area.
3. Documentation: Analyze official documents, news, and reports related to the construction of the Red Bridge and economic development programs in Papua.

B. Data Analysis

¹⁹ Murwaniputri, H., & Wamafma, I. K. (2024). Kajian Aktivitas Pariwisata Pada Masa Pandemi Covid-19 Di Kawasan Wisata Teluk Youtefa Kota Jayapura. *Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis*, 16(1), 49-53.

1. Data reduction: The data obtained was filtered to select relevant information that contributed to understanding the role of the Red Bridge in Papua's economic revival.
2. Data Presentation: Data were organized in the form of descriptive narratives, tables, and thematic diagrams showing the linkages between infrastructure development and economic and social change.
3. Inference: Interpreting data to find patterns, cause-and-effect relationships, and policy recommendations.

C. Research Focus

1. Identify the direct and indirect impacts of the Red Bridge on the local economy.
2. Exploration of challenges, such as inequality of economic access and environmental impacts.

D. Data Validation

Validation is done through triangulation of data sources, including comparison between the results of interviews, observations, and documentation.

With this approach, the article is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the relationship between the Red Bridge infrastructure and Papua's economic revival. Descriptive analysis allows researchers to map positive and negative impacts, thus providing a strong basis for evidence-based policy development for sustainable development in the region.

Result

Subsection 1

Infrastructure development is a systematic effort to create, improve, or enhance the physical facilities and systems that support the social, economic, and environmental life of an area.²⁰ Infrastructure includes transportation networks, public facilities, energy, telecommunications, and other structures that play an important role in supporting community activities and sustainable development.

Infrastructure development in Jayapura, Papua, reflects the ongoing transformation of the region to accelerate economic growth, increase connectivity, and improve the quality of life for the community. As a strategic city and the capital of Papua Province, Jayapura is receiving significant attention in the implementation of infrastructure projects that aim to address geographical challenges while opening up new opportunities for its people.

One of the most striking pieces of infrastructure is the Youtefa Bridge, affectionately called the Red Bridge. Its presence not only shortens the distance between the city center and the

²⁰ Sari, Ratna Kurnia, Dikpride Despa, and Irza Sukmana. "Keterpaduan Infrastruktur Antar Sektor Untuk Mendukung Pengembangan Wilayah." *Jurnal Rekayasa Lampung (JRL)* 1.3 (2022).

area around Youtefa Bay, but also symbolizes greater connectivity for Papua. The bridge supports community mobility, accelerates the distribution of goods, and drives the economy in the region, especially in the trade and tourism sectors.

In addition, the construction of the Trans Papua Road network has also been highlighted. This road connects Jayapura with other remote areas, opening access to areas that were previously difficult to reach. The project holds great promise for reducing regional disparities and facilitating the distribution of basic necessities to various parts of Papua.

The development of the port and airport in Jayapura also plays an important role in facilitating logistics and trade activities. Improved facilities at Jayapura Port and Sentani Airport support the smooth flow of goods and passengers, both from within and outside Papua, thereby strengthening Jayapura's position as an economic gateway in eastern Indonesia.

Not only physical infrastructure, the development of social facilities such as schools, hospitals, and public housing is also a major focus. The government seeks to improve people's access to education, health services, and decent housing. On the other hand, the Palapa Ring Timur project provides digital infrastructure that allows the people of Jayapura to connect with the world through faster and wider internet access.

However, this development journey is not without its challenges. Papua's difficult and complex geographical conditions, the need for environmental conservation, and the importance of involving indigenous peoples are issues that need to be considered. Development that is not only oriented towards economic growth but also sustainability and inclusiveness is key to ensuring that the benefits are felt by all levels of society.

With these efforts, infrastructure development in Jayapura is not only a physical manifestation of progress, but also a hope for a brighter future for Papua. These initiatives are expected to make Jayapura a modern city that respects and embraces its local cultural identity.

Subsection 2

Government policy on infrastructure development in Jayapura, Papua, is part of a national strategy to accelerate equitable development, reduce regional disparities, and improve people's welfare.²¹ As the administrative and economic center of Papua, Jayapura is the focus of various development programs designed to harness the region's potential, strengthen connectivity, and support the development of local resources.

The central government, through national strategic projects, is prioritizing infrastructure development in Jayapura to improve mobility and accessibility. This policy includes the construction of the Youtefa Bridge, which symbolizes connectivity in Papua, as well as the

²¹ Achmad, Rafie Ardiansyah. "PEMEKARAN WILAYAH DI PAPUA DALAM UPAYA MENINGKATKAN KUALITAS HIDUP DAN PEMERATAAN PEMBANGUNAN."

upgrading of the Trans Papua Road network that connects Jayapura with other remote areas. These projects aim to shorten travel time, facilitate the distribution of goods, and open economic access to areas that were previously difficult to reach.

Through a cooperative program between the central and local governments, Jayapura is targeted for urban revitalization projects. This policy includes clean water and sanitation management, modern market development, and public space facilities such as parks and sidewalks. The goal is to create a more comfortable, modern city that supports the economic activities of the local community.

The government has expanded the capacity of Jayapura Port and Sentani Airport, making them key logistics hubs in the Papua region. This policy is designed to improve inter-island connectivity, support inter-provincial trade, and strengthen the emerging tourism sector.

Infrastructure development in Jayapura, Papua, is one of the main focuses of the Indonesian government's policy to accelerate economic development and improve people's welfare. The infrastructure covers a range of sectors, including transportation, energy, health and education, with the aim of strengthening connectivity between regions, supporting economic activity and opening up access to previously isolated communities.

The government has implemented a number of major projects to improve connectivity, such as the construction of the Trans Papua road, which facilitates land transportation from Sabang to Merauke, as well as new ports and airports to support logistics and tourism. The container port in Depapre district, Jayapura, and other ports in Papua and West Papua, for example, have been helpful in reducing the price of goods and boosting the local economy.

The infrastructure development policy in Jayapura has created positive impacts such as increased connectivity, local economic growth, and improved quality of life. However, evaluation and monitoring are still needed to ensure these policies provide inclusive, equitable, and sustainable benefits. With targeted and people-oriented policies, the government is working to make Jayapura a city that not only develops economically, but is also able to maintain its cultural identity and unique ecosystem. This effort is expected to become a model for inclusive development in the Papua region and Eastern Indonesia as a whole.

Discussion

Subsection 1

Identifying the direct and indirect impacts of the Red Bridge on the local economy

The Red Bridge, or Youtefa Bridge, which connects Jayapura City with the area around Youtefa Bay, has had significant direct and indirect impacts on the local economy. This

infrastructure development not only serves as a physical link between regions, but also a catalyst for broader economic growth.

A. Direct Impact on Local Economy

1. Emergence of New Trade Centers

The Red Bridge accelerated accessibility between Jayapura and surrounding areas, including villages and tourist areas. This has led to increased trade activity, especially in the consumer goods and local products sectors. Traditional markets and shopping centers that were previously underdeveloped are now starting to grow, due to a smoother and faster flow of goods, which brings more opportunities for local businesses. For example, the markets around the bridge and Holtekamp area are now transaction points for various commodities, both basic needs and non-consumption goods.

2. Increased Revenue from the Tourism Sector

The natural beauty around Youtefa Bay, which is now easier to reach thanks to the Red Bridge, has opened up great opportunities in the tourism sector. Domestic and international travelers who previously had difficulty accessing the area can now enjoy Papua's natural and cultural attractions more easily. In addition, better infrastructure attracts more investment in hotels, restaurants and other tourism facilities, directly increasing local income. The region is now a popular tourist destination, and the impact is felt by local communities involved in the business of providing tourism services, such as tour guides, transportation entrepreneurs, and souvenir sellers..

B. Indirect Impact on Local Economy

1. Improved Quality of Other Infrastructure

The Red Bridge also has an indirect impact on the development of other infrastructure, such as roads, public facilities, and telecommunication systems. Increased accessibility brings demand for improvements and upgrades to other supporting infrastructure, such as land transportation and electricity networks. These improvements provide wider benefits to the community, as they reduce travel time, increase the efficiency of goods distribution, and open up opportunities for other sectors to grow, such as creative industries and local manufacturing.

2. Driving Socio-Economic Change

The Red Bridge has accelerated the urbanization process around the Youtefa Bay and Holtekamp areas. The social impact of this development is increased social mobility, where people who were previously limited by geographical factors now have more

opportunities to engage in economic and social activities. This opens up new employment opportunities, both in the trade, tourism, and infrastructure-related sectors, which encourages the improvement of the welfare of local communities.

Overall, the Red Bridge serves not only as a transportation facility, but also as an economic driver that encourages new opportunities, improves social conditions, and increases the competitiveness of the Papua region in domestic and international markets..

Subsection 2

Exploration of challenges, such as unequal economic access and environmental impacts.

While the construction of the Red Bridge in Jayapura has had a major positive impact on the local economy, particularly in accelerating connectivity and boosting trade and tourism, there are a number of challenges that need to be addressed, particularly in terms of inequality of economic access and environmental impacts.

A. Inequality of Economic Access

One of the key challenges is inequality in the distribution of economic benefits. While the bridge provides convenience for urban communities and large businesses in Jayapura, some indigenous communities and remote areas may not feel a significant direct impact. While access to larger and more efficient markets is opening up, some communities in rural areas may still struggle to take advantage of these opportunities due to limited resources, lack of supporting infrastructure, and low skills in accessing and utilizing new economic opportunities.

In addition, with the influx of large investments in tourism and commerce, there are concerns that local residents who are not ready to compete in these sectors may lose their economic opportunities to migrants from outside the region or large corporations. The development of tourism and commercial areas is often dominated by large businesses, which are able to manage large investments, while local businesses-especially MSMEs-may struggle to compete in terms of access to capital, markets and wider distribution networks..

B. Environmental Impact

The environmental impact of the construction of the Red Bridge is also an issue that cannot be ignored. While the infrastructure may improve mobility and economic growth, the presence of the bridge and increased human activity in the Youtefa Bay area may damage sensitive ecosystems, such as coral reefs and mangrove forests. Increased traffic flow and development in the area risks increasing pollution, which can disrupt natural habitats and biodiversity. In the long term, these ecosystem changes can impact the

resilience of the environment that supports local livelihoods, especially communities that depend on natural resources for their livelihoods, such as fishermen and farmers.

In addition, large infrastructure developments often require dredging of soil or alteration of waterways which can lead to erosion and sedimentation that threaten water quality around the area. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the management of these infrastructure developments is done by considering the principles of sustainable development and the participation of local communities in decision-making.

The construction of the Red Bridge in Jayapura has brought many benefits, but also serious challenges related to unequal economic access and environmental impacts. Therefore, more inclusive and sustainable policies need to be implemented to ensure that the economic benefits can be felt by all levels of society, while preserving the environment. By involving local communities in every stage of planning and implementation, and ensuring strict environmental regulations, the negative impacts of this infrastructure development can be minimized.

Conclusion

The construction of the Red Bridge (Youtefa) in Jayapura is a key infrastructure project supporting Papua's economic growth. By enhancing connectivity between Jayapura city and its surrounding areas, the bridge not only accelerates the mobility of goods and people but also opens up new economic opportunities, particularly in the trade and tourism sectors. New commercial hubs have emerged around the bridge, and the tourism sector is thriving due to improved access to Youtefa Bay and other tourist destinations.

However, the impact of this development is not entirely positive. Economic access disparities have arisen, where only a portion of the population benefits directly from the project. Local businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs), face stiff competition from larger businesses and external investors who are better equipped to capitalize on the economic potential. Additionally, environmental impacts from the infrastructure development, especially in sensitive areas such as mangroves and coral reefs, must be a primary concern.

Overall, while the Red Bridge plays a crucial role in boosting Papua's economy, inclusive and sustainable development policies are essential to ensure that the economic benefits are evenly distributed among the population. At the same time, it is crucial to preserve the environment and sustain the natural resources that support the livelihoods of Papua's people..

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