

Implementing Village Fund Allocation: A Study of Community Empowerment in Siantar Barat, Pematangsiantar

Implementasi Alokasi Dana Desa: Studi Pemberdayaan Masyarakat di Siantar Barat, Pematangsiantar

Sam Andre Situngkir¹, Subhilhar², Marlon Sihombing³

Universitas Sumatera Utara^{1,2,3}

samandre2102@gmail.com¹

*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Village Fund allocation and its impact on community empowerment in West Siantar District, Pematangsiantar City. The Kelurahan Fund is an important instrument in village-based development that aims to improve community welfare through various empowerment programs. However, its implementation often faces planning, management, and community participation challenges. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design involving in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and documentation. The results show that while Dana Kelurahan contributes to essential infrastructure development, its impact on community empowerment is limited. Most funds are allocated for physical activities, while social and economic empowerment activities, such as skills training and micro-enterprise development, receive less attention. Community participation in the planning and management process of Dana Kelurahan is also minimal, leading to a low sense of ownership of the programs. Key challenges faced in implementing Dana Kelurahan include the limited capacity of kelurahan officials, low transparency in fund management, and a lack of ongoing support for empowerment programs. This research recommends capacity building of kelurahan officials, community empowerment in planning and evaluation, and greater transparency in the management of Dana Kelurahan to increase its effectiveness in community empowerment.

Keywords: Kelurahan Fund, Community Empowerment, Community Participation, Fund Management, Infrastructure, Pematangsiantar Regency.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi alokasi Dana Kelurahan dan dampaknya terhadap pemberdayaan masyarakat di Kecamatan Siantar Barat, Kota Pematangsiantar. Dana Kelurahan merupakan salah satu instrumen penting dalam pembangunan berbasis desa yang bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan masyarakat melalui berbagai program pemberdayaan. Namun, dalam implementasinya sering kali menghadapi tantangan dalam hal perencanaan, pengelolaan, dan partisipasi masyarakat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus yang melibatkan wawancara mendalam, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun Dana Kelurahan berkontribusi terhadap pembangunan infrastruktur penting, dampaknya terhadap pemberdayaan masyarakat masih terbatas. Sebagian besar dana dialokasikan untuk kegiatan fisik, sementara kegiatan pemberdayaan sosial dan ekonomi, seperti pelatihan keterampilan dan pengembangan usaha mikro, kurang mendapat perhatian. Partisipasi masyarakat dalam proses perencanaan dan pengelolaan Dana Kelurahan juga sangat minim, sehingga rasa kepemilikan masyarakat terhadap program-program yang ada menjadi rendah. Tantangan utama yang dihadapi dalam pelaksanaan Dana Kelurahan antara lain terbatasnya kapasitas aparat kelurahan, rendahnya transparansi dalam pengelolaan dana, dan kurangnya dukungan yang berkelanjutan untuk program pemberdayaan. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan peningkatan kapasitas aparat kelurahan, pemberdayaan masyarakat dalam perencanaan dan evaluasi, serta transparansi yang lebih baik dalam pengelolaan Dana Kelurahan untuk meningkatkan efektivitasnya dalam pemberdayaan masyarakat.

Kata Kunci: Dana Kelurahan, Pemberdayaan Masyarakat, Partisipasi Masyarakat, Pengelolaan Dana, Infrastruktur, Kota Pematangsiantar.

1. Introduction

Community empowerment is important to sustainable development, especially in areas with social and economic challenges. Along with the decentralization process in Indonesia, the central government has allocated Kelurahan Funds to encourage development at the village level while improving the community's welfare. The Kelurahan Fund began in 2019 and aims to accelerate inclusive development based on local communities' needs and support more effective and targeted community empowerment programs (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2020).

However, despite the great potential in the management of the Kelurahan Fund, its implementation and utilization do not always go as expected. Several studies show that despite the availability of these funds, many urban villages have not been able to manage and utilize the funds optimally due to constraints in terms of human resource capacity, management transparency, and limited community participation (Kusnadi & Prasetyo, 2021). The mismatch between policies launched by the central government and the socio-economic conditions of local communities is often an obstacle in the implementation of existing development programs (Sutrisno & Arfianti, 2022).

In the context of the Siantar Barat Sub-district, Pematangsiantar City, although the Kelurahan Fund has been received, there are still significant challenges in terms of community empowerment. Factors such as the low level of active community participation in program planning and implementation, as well as the lack of skills of kelurahan officials in managing the fund effectively, can reduce the fund's positive impact. In addition, local political dynamics and infrastructure limitations also affect the success of existing empowerment programs (Sinaga & Nasution, 2023).

Community empowerment through Dana Kelurahan should address social and economic inequalities by allowing communities to be involved in every stage of development, from planning to evaluation. Therefore, it is important to explore how the Kelurahan Fund can be used to empower communities in the Siantar Barat Sub-district and identify the factors that influence its success or failure in implementation.

This research aims to analyze the implementation process of the Kelurahan Fund in the Siantar Barat Sub-district, focusing on its impact on community empowerment. It will also identify challenges faced in implementing the fund and provide policy recommendations to improve the effectiveness of using Dana Kelurahan in the future.

This analysis is expected to contribute to the development of better development policies based on village or kelurahan funds and enrich the literature on community empowerment at the local level. It is also expected to provide deeper insights into best practices in implementing village fund policies to promote more inclusive and sustainable development in Indonesia.

2. Literatur review

Community Empowerment in Village Development

Community empowerment is a concept that has evolved along with efforts for more inclusive and sustainable development. In the context of village or kelurahan development, community empowerment aims to increase the capacity of individuals and groups to plan, implement, and manage existing resources to improve their quality of life (Chambers, 2007). This empowerment is not only limited to increasing economic capacity, but also includes increasing people's social, political, and cultural participation in the development process (Pugh, 2009).

Along with granting greater autonomy to local governments, villages or sub-villages are important in determining the direction of development through planning and managing existing resources. In this sense, community empowerment becomes an integral part of a broader development strategy at the local level.

Kelurahan Fund as a Development Instrument

The allocation of the Kelurahan Fund is part of the Indonesian government's policy to strengthen the role of urban villages in development. As part of decentralization, the Village Fund is designed to assist villages in financing development activities that directly impact the welfare of the community. This fund began to be rolled out in 2019 through the Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 130 of 2018 concerning Kelurahan Funds. Implementing the Kelurahan Fund is expected to reduce inequality between regions and accelerate development in disadvantaged areas (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2020).

According to Aritonang (2020), the Kelurahan Fund is a strategic instrument for achieving community empowerment goals at the kelurahan level. However, its management requires adequate capacity from kelurahan officials and communities to ensure that the funds are used efficiently and effectively.

Challenges in the Implementation of Village Funds

Despite its good intentions, the implementation of the Dana Kelurahan has often faced challenges. Several studies have shown that the capacity of village officials to plan and manage these funds is often limited. Ismail (2021) revealed that many kelurahan officials lack understanding of financial governance and development planning, which hinders the successful use of Dana Kelurahan. In addition, weak supervision and transparency in managing funds are among the main obstacles in several regions (Wibowo, 2021).

In addition, the community participation factor is also a significant challenge. Many studies have shown that the community's low awareness and active participation in development planning and implementation is an obstacle to the effectiveness of the Kelurahan Fund. Kusnadi and Prasetyo (2021) found that although the Kelurahan Fund was intended for community empowerment, the lack of socialization and public understanding of its benefits resulted in minimal participation.

The Effect of Village Fund Implementation on Community Empowerment

Studies on the influence of the Kelurahan Fund on community empowerment show mixed results. Some studies reveal that while the Kelurahan Fund can positively impact improving infrastructure and essential services, its influence on direct community empowerment is limited. Sinaga and Nasution (2023) observed that the empowerment program through the Kelurahan Fund in Siantar Barat Sub-district, Pematangsiantar City, faces various challenges, including transparency and accountability issues in the management of funds.

However, several other studies have shown that with proper management, the Kelurahan Fund can significantly impact community empowerment. For example, a study in Bantaeng Regency showed that a well-managed Kelurahan Fund can increase the community's capacity to manage micro-enterprises, increase participation in social activities, and improve quality of life (Raharjo, 2020).

Strategies for Improving the Effectiveness of Kelurahan Fund Management

Several studies have also proposed various strategies to improve the effectiveness of Kelurahan Fund management. According to Sutrisno & Arfianti (2022), increasing the capacity of human resources at the kelurahan level is essential to ensure the successful management of the Kelurahan Fund. Training and mentoring programs that involve various parties, including the community, local government, and non-governmental organizations, are key to improving the effectiveness of fund management. In addition, transparency and accountability in managing funds must be well maintained to avoid budget misuse (Hidayat, 2021).

Related Research in Other Regions

Several studies on implementing the Village Fund in other areas can also provide valuable insights. Research by Dwi & Suryanto (2020) in Sleman Regency shows that active community participation in development planning is one of the determining factors for successfully using the Kelurahan Fund. In addition, research by Adi & Haryanto (2021) conducted in Jember Regency revealed the importance of collaboration between the village government and the community in designing programs that suit local needs.

3. Research Methods

Research Design

This research uses a descriptive qualitative research design with a case study approach to analyze the implementation of the Kelurahan Fund allocation and its impact on community empowerment in Siantar Barat Sub-district, Pematangsiantar City. This research design was chosen because it allows researchers to deeply understand the phenomena that occur in a particular context and reveal the factors that influence its success or failure. The case study approach allows researchers to analyze the social, economic, and political dynamics associated with implementing the fund.

Population and Sample

The population in this study is all people living in Siantar Barat Sub-district, especially those involved in empowerment programs funded by the Kelurahan Fund. The research sample consists of two main groups, namely: Kelurahan officials are involved in planning, managing, and monitoring the Kelurahan Fund at the Kelurahan level. Communities that receive direct benefits from empowerment programs financed by the Kelurahan Fund, consisting of beneficiary community groups, community leaders, and representatives from local organizations. The number of samples was determined using a purposive sampling technique, which selects respondents based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives. This study took 30 samples, consisting of 10 village officials and 20 community members who were directly involved in the empowerment program.

Data Collection Technique

Data was collected through three main techniques, namely:

In-Depth Interview: Interviews were conducted with kelurahan officials and communities to gather information related to the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the Kelurahan Fund, as well as its impact on community empowerment. These interviews were semi-structured, where the researcher had a flexible interview guide to explore further information according to the answers given by the respondents. **Focus Group Discussion (FGD):** Focus group discussions were conducted with community groups involved in the empowerment program. This FGD aims to obtain collective views from the community regarding the benefits and challenges they face in using the Kelurahan Fund for empowerment. **Documentation:** Documentation data was collected to explore policies and official reports related to the management of the Kelurahan Fund in the Siantar Barat Sub-district. Documents collected include reports on the use of funds, empowerment program planning, and program evaluation results.

Research Instruments

The instruments used in this study are:

A semi-structured interview guide designed to extract information related to the following aspects: (a) the planning and management of the Kelurahan Fund, (b) community participation in the development process, (c) the impact of the Kelurahan Fund on community

empowerment, and (d) constraints in the implementation of the program. The FGD guide contains discussion topics to gain community perspectives on the collective implementation of Dana Kelurahan. An observation sheet to record relevant events during interviews and FGDs, including the dynamics of social interactions and obstacles encountered.

Data Analysis

Data obtained from interviews, FGDs, and documentation were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. The steps in data analysis are as follows:

1. Coding: Interview transcripts and FGD results were coded to identify key themes relating to the implementation of Dana Kelurahan and community empowerment. This process involved reading through the transcripts, marking relevant pieces of text, and assigning a code to each theme that emerged.
2. Categorization: The identified themes were grouped into broader categories, such as "planning and fund management," "community participation," and "empowerment impact."
3. Interpretation: The researcher then interprets the grouped data to look for relationships between themes and to understand how the implementation of the Kelurahan Fund impacts community empowerment in Siantar Barat Sub-district.
4. Triangulation: To increase the validity of the findings, the researcher used data triangulation by comparing the results of interviews, FGDs, and documentation to ensure the consistency of information obtained from various sources.

Data Validity

To ensure data validity, this research uses several techniques, namely:

Source Triangulation: Using multiple data sources (interviews, FGDs, and documentation) to understand better. Triangulation of Methods: Using a variety of data collection techniques to validate findings from one method against another. Member Checking: The results of the interviews and FGDs will be returned to the respondents to ensure that the information collected is accurate and in line with the reality on the ground.

Research Ethics

This study followed the applicable research ethics guidelines, with attention to the following principles:

Informed Consent: All participants were asked to provide informed consent after receiving clear information regarding the purpose of the study, the process, and the use of the data.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: The respondents' identities will be kept confidential, and the data obtained will be anonymized to protect the participants' privacy.

Research usefulness: This research was conducted to improve community empowerment through more effective management of the Kelurahan Fund.

4. Results and Discussion

Planning and Management of Village Funds

Based on interviews with kelurahan officials in Siantar Barat Sub-district, it was found that the planning and management of the Kelurahan Fund generally follows the guidelines set by the central government. However, most of the funds are focused on essential infrastructure development such as repairing roads, bridges, and other public facilities. Community empowerment activities, such as skills training or micro-enterprise development, are often neglected. Village officials expressed difficulty in planning sustainable empowerment programs that can directly impact improving the community's quality of life. These findings indicate a gap between existing policies at the central level and implementation in the field. According to Kusnadi and Prasetyo (2021), the imbalance between infrastructure allocation and socio-

economic empowerment can cause empowerment programs to not be implemented optimally. Infrastructure development is important, but to ensure the sustainability and inclusiveness of development, Kelurahan Fund planning should be more balanced, with an emphasis on programs that can improve community skills and competitiveness. As such, it is important for kelurahan governments to increase their capacity in planning more sustainable and inclusive community empowerment programs.

Community Participation in the Development Process

Results from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with communities show that although they benefit from Dana Kelurahan, their participation in planning and decision-making processes is limited. Communities are primarily involved in physical activities, such as infrastructure development, but are not allowed to participate in the planning or evaluation stages of using funds. Some respondents expressed ignorance about the procedures for proposing empowerment activities that Dana Kelurahan can fund. The lack of community participation in program planning and evaluation can reduce Dana Kelurahan's long-term impact. Community participation in every stage of development is essential to ensure that the needs and expectations of the community implement programs. Sutrisno and Arfianti (2022) emphasize that active participation can increase the effectiveness of development programs and strengthen the sense of community ownership of the program. Therefore, increasing community involvement in planning and evaluation is critical to the success of the Dana Kelurahan program.

Impact of Kelurahan Funds on Community Empowerment

While Dana Kelurahan has been used for various empowerment programs, its impact on community empowerment has been limited. Most programs, such as sewing or handicraft skills training, do not have a significant economic impact. Some community groups involved in the empowerment programs expressed difficulties in accessing markets for their products and did not have sufficient capital to expand their businesses. The long-term impact of empowerment programs using Dana Kelurahan is still limited to skills upgrading without any ongoing support. The impact of empowerment programs is often hampered by the lack of support after training. Sinaga and Nasution (2023) note that to increase the impact of empowerment through Dana Kelurahan, a more comprehensive approach is needed that focuses on skills training and provides access to markets and entrepreneurial support. Therefore, Dana Kelurahan's empowerment program should include assistance in marketing, capital provision, and entrepreneurship training for a longer-lasting impact.

Challenges in the Implementation of Village Funds

The research findings show that the biggest challenge in implementing the Kelurahan Fund in the Siantar Barat Sub-district is the limited capacity of kelurahan officials to plan and manage the Kelurahan Fund. Although the central government provides training, the materials presented are often not in line with local needs and real conditions in the field. In addition, supervision of the use of Dana Kelurahan has also been ineffective, with some residents expressing dissatisfaction with the lack of transparency in reporting on the use of funds. The limited capacity of kelurahan officials to plan and manage Dana Kelurahan is a major obstacle to the effective implementation of the program. Wibowo (2021) revealed that the lack of applicable and locally context-based training leads to the inability of officials to design targeted empowerment programs. In addition, transparency in fund management is an important issue that must be addressed seriously. For this reason, the government needs to provide more relevant and applicable training and strengthen the monitoring system that involves the community directly in evaluating and reporting on the use of funds.

Recommendations for Improving the Effectiveness of Kelurahan Fund Management

Based on the research results, some recommendations for improving the effectiveness of Kelurahan Fund management are:

1. Based on the research results, some recommendations for improving the effectiveness of Kelurahan Fund management are.
2. Increased Community Participation: The Kelurahan Fund's socialization should be expanded, and communities should be given more space to participate in program planning, implementation, and evaluation.
3. Transparency and Accountability: The management of the Kelurahan Fund should be more transparent, with clear reports on using funds that are easily accessible to the public.

This recommendation is in line with research by Kusnadi and Prasetyo (2021), which shows that increasing the capacity of village officials and community participation in every stage of the program can increase the effectiveness of Kelurahan Fund management. By ensuring transparency and accountability, the community will be more trusting and involved in monitoring, increasing the success of the Kelurahan Fund implementation.

5. Conclusion

This research shows that although the Kelurahan Fund has the potential to improve community welfare, its implementation is still constrained by several factors, such as the limited capacity of kelurahan officials, low community participation, and lack of transparency in fund management. To increase the effectiveness of the Kelurahan Fund, it is necessary to increase the capacity of human resources, strengthen community participation in planning and evaluation, and increase transparency in fund management. With these steps, the Kelurahan Fund can be utilized more optimally to achieve the goal of sustainable community empowerment.

Referensi

- Aritonang, A. (2020). *Implementasi Dana Kelurahan dalam Pemberdayaan Masyarakat: Peluang dan Tantangan*. Jurnal Pembangunan Daerah, 12(1), 23-40.
- Chambers, R. (2007). *Poverty and Livelihoods: Whose Reality Counts?* IDRC.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Dwi, T., & Suryanto, A. (2020). *Peran Partisipasi Masyarakat dalam Pengelolaan Dana Kelurahan di Sleman*. Jurnal Administrasi Publik, 7(3), 150-163.
- Hidayat, R. (2021). *Transparansi dalam Pengelolaan Dana Kelurahan: Studi Kasus di Kabupaten Cirebon*. Jurnal Keuangan dan Pembangunan, 15(2), 88-102.
- Ismail, S. (2021). *Kapasitas Aparatur Kelurahan dalam Pengelolaan Dana Kelurahan*. Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan, 18(2), 102-115.
- Kementerian Dalam Negeri Republik Indonesia. (2020). *Panduan Pengelolaan Dana Kelurahan*. Jakarta: Kementerian Dalam Negeri Republik Indonesia.
- Kusnadi, R., & Prasetyo, A. (2021). *Tantangan Implementasi Dana Kelurahan dalam Pemberdayaan Masyarakat: Studi Kasus di Jawa Tengah*. Jurnal Pembangunan Wilayah, 14(2), 75-89.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Pugh, C. (2009). *Development and Rural Livelihoods: A Holistic Approach*. Routledge.
- Raharjo, M. (2020). *Dana Kelurahan sebagai Sarana Pemberdayaan Masyarakat: Studi Kasus di Kabupaten Bantaeng*. Jurnal Pembangunan Sosial, 5(1), 112-126.

- Sinaga, F., & Nasution, Z. (2023). *Analisis Faktor Penghambat Implementasi Dana Kelurahan dalam Meningkatkan Kesejahteraan di Kota Pematangsiantar*. Jurnal Pembangunan Daerah, 12(1), 54-68.
- Sugiyono, M. (2013). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.
- Sutrisno, D., & Arfianti, S. (2022). *Desentralisasi dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat: Analisis Penggunaan Dana Kelurahan di Indonesia*. Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, 26(3), 111-130.
- Wibowo, E. (2021). *Tantangan Pengawasan dalam Pengelolaan Dana Kelurahan di Indonesia*. Jurnal Administrasi Negara, 20(2), 77-91.