

Implementation of the Village Fund Utilization Policy in Stunting Prevention Efforts in Passo Village, West Kakas District, Minahasa Regency

Jeanne A. Sumendap^{1*}, Jetty E. H Mokat¹, Goinpeace H. Tumbel¹

¹Master of Public Administration Program, Universitas Negeri Manado, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: jeannesumendap@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the implementation of the Village Fund utilization policy in Passo Village, West Kakas District, Minahasa Regency, focusing specifically on its role in stunting prevention. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the research aims to evaluate how the policy is executed, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and assess its impact on community health outcomes. The research draws on Van Meter and Van Horn's policy implementation model to interpret field findings. The results indicate that while participatory planning and accountable fund management have contributed positively to improved nutrition awareness and reduced stunting rates, significant barriers remain, including limited facilities, weak inter-agency coordination, and low community engagement. The study concludes that bridging the gap between policy planning and actual implementation is essential for sustainable impact.

Keywords: Community Health, Village Fund Policy Implementation, Public Administration, Stunting Prevention

INTRODUCTION

Village Funds were introduced as a strategic policy tool to promote equitable development and social welfare at the village level in Indonesia. In line with Law No. 6/2014 on Villages, these funds aim to empower communities by enabling them to address their specific needs. One of the national priorities is the reduction of stunting rates, a pressing health issue characterized by chronic malnutrition and developmental delays among children. Passo Village, identified as one of the areas with a high prevalence of stunting in Minahasa Regency, represents a critical case study for analyzing how Village Funds are implemented for stunting prevention.

Despite a solid regulatory framework, including Government Regulation No. 60/2014 and the Ministerial Regulation PMK No. 201/PMK.07/2022, implementation remains uneven. In Passo, efforts have been made to shift from top-down fund allocation models to more contextualized approaches, emphasizing health infrastructure, community training, and cross-sector coordination. However, persistent issues such as weak communication, limited resources, and sporadic evaluation mechanisms hinder the full realization of intended policy goals.

This research addresses the following questions:

1. How is the Village Fund utilization policy implemented in stunting prevention in Passo Village?
2. What are the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting the implementation of this policy?
3. What impacts does the policy have on community awareness and stunting reduction?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical foundation of this research is Van Meter and Van Horn's model of policy implementation, which identifies six key variables that influence the success of policy execution: policy standards and objectives, resources, inter-organizational communication, characteristics of implementing agencies, socio-economic and political conditions, and the disposition of the implementers.

In the realm of village governance, the effective deployment of Village Funds is pivotal to achieving community health objectives. The Ministry of Health and Bappenas have championed a multisectoral convergence approach, recognizing that stunting arises not only from poor nutrition but also from insufficient water, sanitation, healthcare, and education systems. Implementing this convergence model at the village level is both a challenge and a necessity for regions like Passo Village.

Previous studies have emphasized the technical aspects of fund allocation and have noted improvements in nutritional outcomes. However, many of these studies, such as those by Muchid et al. (2024), have not delved deeply into the institutional or cultural dimensions of policy failure. This study

bridges that gap by focusing not only on what was done but also on how, why, and under what conditions policy implementation deviates from its intended goals.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach, as it seeks to understand the social phenomena surrounding Village Fund implementation in Passo Village. The primary data collection methods include in-depth interviews with village heads, community health workers, and residents; non-participant observation during policy-related activities; and a review of planning and implementation documents.

The research applies a triangulation strategy to ensure data validity, analyzing findings through Miles and Huberman's model involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The theoretical framework for analysis is based on Van Meter and Van Horn's six-variable model, supplemented with insights from Edwards III and Grindle.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the Village Fund utilization policy in Passo Village reveals both achievements and challenges. Field data indicate that programs related to stunting prevention, including supplementary feeding, maternal education, and community-based health checks, were prioritized in budget allocation. These were executed with varying degrees of success.

Health Services

Village Funds were used to support the development of Posyandu services and to purchase nutritional supplements for children. However, limited health personnel and lack of modern equipment hindered program effectiveness. Community health workers played a vital role in conducting door-to-door visits, but their capacity was constrained by training and logistical limitations.

Community Empowerment

Village meetings (Musdes) were held regularly, and some community members reported being involved in planning. Nevertheless, meaningful engagement was often limited to elite stakeholders. Apathy among residents and a lack of awareness about stunting weakened community oversight and feedback mechanisms.

Infrastructure Development

Village Funds also financed clean water infrastructure and latrines to address hygiene-related causes of stunting. These facilities reduced the incidence of diarrhea among children, contributing

indirectly to better nutrition outcomes. However, project implementation was delayed due to poor contractor coordination and weak technical monitoring.

Cross-Sector Partnerships

While formal partnerships with health departments and district offices were established, coordination often lacked consistency. Joint planning and evaluation sessions were infrequent, and data sharing between sectors remained a challenge.

Policy Impact

Despite the limitations, improvements in child nutrition indicators were recorded, particularly in households that received consistent support. The local health center reported a decline in the stunting rate, from 28% in 2022 to 20.5% in 2023. These gains underscore the importance of sustained intervention and the potential of Village Funds to catalyze community-based health reforms.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Village Fund utilization policy in Passo Village demonstrates that decentralization, when matched with local commitment and community participation, can lead to significant improvements in public health outcomes. The policy facilitated targeted interventions in health services, sanitation, and nutrition education. However, implementation was hindered by a range of factors: inconsistent communication between agencies, inadequate infrastructure, limited technical and financial resources, and weak community engagement. The lack of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework further constrained the ability to learn from implementation and adapt programs to emerging needs.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen capacity building for village officials and health cadres through continuous training.
2. Establish regular cross-sectoral coordination meetings with defined action plans.
3. Improve data transparency and feedback loops through digital reporting platforms.
4. Foster community education campaigns to raise awareness on the importance of early childhood nutrition.
5. Integrate village planning processes with district health targets to ensure alignment and scalability.

These steps will help ensure that Village Funds are not only disbursed but also strategically utilized for transformative impact, particularly in addressing complex public health issues such as stunting.

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