

Implementation of Village Fund Use Policy in Community Empowerment in Sungai Ringin Village, Sekadau Hilir District Sekadau Regency

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ABSTRACT: The issue of this study was based on the implementation of village fund utilization in village community empowerment, which was not yet optimal because there was a gap in understanding the regulations that were constantly being updated. This study aimed to describe and analyze the implementation process of the village fund utilization policy in village community empowerment at the Sungai Ringin Village of Sekadau Hilir District in Sekadau Regency. The results of this study revealed that the organization process was done collaboratively between the village government, the Village Consultative Body (BPD), and the public figures in the Village Development Planning Meeting forum, who became the basis for determining the direction of fund utilization. The policy interpretation by the village apparatus ran adaptively, adjusted to the needs and socioeconomic conditions of the local community. The application of this policy was manifested through tangible programs such as infrastructure development, the promotion of productive economic enterprises, and support for food security and education. Although the overall implementation had proceeded well, challenges remained in terms of inter-agency coordination, the capacity of implementers, and community understanding of the policy's substance. Therefore, the researcher suggests that strengthening these three aspects can further optimize the effectiveness of Village Funds in empowering communities..

KEYWORDS: Implementation of Village Fund Use, Community Empowerment, Food Security and Education

INTRODUCTION

This village fund policy is stipulated in Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration of the Republic of Indonesia Number 7 of 2023 concerning Detailed Priorities for the Use of Village Funds, followed by Regulation of the Regent of Sekadau Number 83 of 2023 concerning Technical Guidelines for the Use of Village Funds for the 2024 Fiscal Year. This regulation refers to Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration Number 7 of 2023, which stipulates the focus of Village Fund use for: Addressing extreme poverty through Village Direct Cash Assistance (BLT Desa);

Food and animal security programs, with a minimum allocation of 20% of the Village Fund ceiling for each village; village-scale stunting prevention and reduction programs through specific and sensitive interventions; and priority sector programs in villages through capital assistance from Village-Owned Enterprises (BUM Desa) or joint BUM Desa. Furthermore, this regulation stipulates that Village Funds can be used for village government operational costs, with a maximum allocation of 3% of the Village Fund ceiling for each village. Village governments are required to publish the focus of Village Fund use since the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APB Desa) is stipulated, to ensure transparency and accountability in the management of Village Funds. This village fund policy is stipulated in Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration of the Republic of Indonesia Number 7 of 2023 concerning Detailed Priorities for the Use of Village Funds, followed by Regulation of the Regent of Sekadau Number 83 of 2023 concerning Technical Guidelines for the Use of Village Funds for the 2024 Fiscal Year. This regulation refers to Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration Number 7 of 2023, which stipulates the focus of Village Fund use for: Addressing extreme poverty through Village Direct Cash Assistance (BLT Desa);

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Sungai Ringin Village, located in Sekadau Hilir District, is one of the villages receiving this Village Fund allocation, which is used for various development activities at the village level, as well as community empowerment to improve their quality of life. A

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budget ceiling, in a budgetary or financial context, refers to the maximum limit or allocation of funds provided for a specific program or activity. This ceiling determines the amount of funds available for use in implementing that activity during a specific period, such as a fiscal year. For example, in the context of the Village Fund, the Village Fund ceiling is the amount of funds allocated by the government to a village to finance various development and community empowerment activities in that village.

This ceiling serves as a reference for planning, implementing, and accounting for the use of village funds in accordance with applicable regulations, with the aim of promoting independence and sustainable development at the village level, particularly for the community in Sungai Ringin Village, Sekadau Hilir District. To find out the Village Fund Allocation and Village Fund ceiling in Sungai Ringin Village, Sekadau Hilir District, Sekadau Regency for the last three years from 2022-2024, please see table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Village Fund Allocation Ceiling and Village Funds in Sungai Ringin Village, Sekadau Hilir District, Sekadau Regency for the Last Three Years 2022-2024

NO	Year	Maximum Budget		Amount
		MaB ADD	ximum Budget DD	
1	2022	Rp. 672.998.941	Rp. 992.867.000	Rp.1.665.865.941
2	2023	Rp. 788.298.597	Rp. 991.525.000	Rp.1.779.823.597
3	2024	Rp. 577.322.890	Rp.1.001.913.000	Rp.1.579.235.890
Total		Rp. 2.033.620.428	Rp.2.986.305.000	Rp.5.019.925.428

SOURCES: KANTOR DESA SUNGAI RINGIN, KEC. SEKADAU HILIR, MARET 2025

Based on table 1.1, it shows that the increase in the Village Fund usage ceiling in Sungai Ringin Village from 2022 to 2024 indicates a positive response to development needs, the success of previous fund management, and efforts to improve the welfare of village communities in a sustainable manner as well as an effort to improve the quality of life of the community, accelerate development, and support government programs to reduce the development gap between villages and cities.

David Easton (in Islamy, 2017:25) states that "public policy can be defined as the forced (legitimate) allocation of values to the entire community." This statement implies that only the government can establish policy values for employees, who then create policies to instill a sense of accountability within the employees to the organization as a whole.

Public policy itself is defined in two categories by Leslie A. Pal (in Widodo, 2013:10). First, the definition emphasizes the primary intent and purpose as key policy criteria. Second, the definition of policy emphasizes impact. Therefore, the policy on the use of village funds to empower rural communities can provide insights into improving their economic well-being and quality of life. Thus, public policy is a series of interconnected choices (including decisions about inaction) made by government agencies and officials. The concept of policy is because policy is related to decision-making, which involves continuing an action, whether to take action or not, or including commands and prohibitions on taking action.

Implementation is an activity intended to operationalize a policy. According to Jones (2006:46), the policy implementation process is defined as having three pillars: a. The Organizational Stage, which involves reorganizing resources, establishing units, and implementing methods to implement programs and bureaucracy as a tool to achieve goals., b. The Interpretation Stage, which involves interpreting policies in the form of plans and directives, and understanding each stage of policy implementation., c. The Application Stage, which involves routine provisions and services, and activities related to policy implementation.

Based on what Jones put forward, it shows that the theory provides a systematic and comprehensive analytical framework in understanding how a policy is implemented from planning to implementation in the field. The three main stages in Jones' theory of organization, interpretation, and application are very relevant to analyzing the implementation of the Village Fund use policy in the context of community empowerment in Sungai Ringin Village. Through this approach, it can be clearly identified how the process of institutional and resource arrangement (organization) is carried out by the village government, how the policy is interpreted and communicated to implementers and the community (interpretation), and how empowerment activities are actually implemented in the field (application/implementation).

METHOD

The type of research that will be used is in accordance with the problem, nature and objectives of the research. This research uses a qualitative type of research in descriptive form. According to Faisal (2012:12) that descriptive research is "research in which there are efforts to describe, record, analyze and interpret current conditions". Based on the opinion above, it shows that descriptive research is a way of describing or depicting symptoms based on actual data and facts at the time the research takes place in the field as they are, in accordance with the objectives of the research, especially regarding the Implementation Process of Village Fund Use Policy in Village Community Empowerment in Sungai Ringin Village, Sekadau Hilir District, Sekadau Regency.

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This research was conducted in Sungai Ringin Village, Sekadau Hilir District, Sekadau Regency. The location was chosen based on the consideration that there are problems related to the Implementation of Village Fund Use Policy in Village Community Empowerment such as: Limitations in the capacity of apparatus and coordination between related parties; There is a gap in understanding of regulations that are continuously updated; and limitations of human resources and technology, Delays in disbursement of funds, lack of supervision and no follow-up for program sustainability. With various problems that can arise in the implementation of village fund use policies, research on Sungai Ringin Village can provide important insights regarding the challenges faced in community empowerment efforts. The results of this study can be used to improve village fund policies and implementation in the future.

Data Collection Techniques used in this study consist of: Observation, Interview, and Documentation Study, supported by data collection tools as the main instrument (key instrument) assisted by: Observation Guidelines, Interview Guidelines, and documentation tools such as cameras, tape recorders, photocopies and others. Data analysis used in this study is qualitative analysis. Data analysis in qualitative research is the process of simplifying data into a form that is easier to read and interpret. Qualitative research views data as a product of the process of providing researcher interpretations in which there are already contained meanings that have references to values. Then the data analysis stage according to Moleong (2013: 103) consists of data collection, data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions.

In this study to test the validation of data obtained in the field, researchers used technical triangulation, because in this study using different data collection techniques in obtaining data from the same source, namely observation, interviews and documentation regarding the Implementation Process of Village Fund Use Policy in Village Community Empowerment in Sungai Ringin Village, Sekadau Hilir District, Sekadau Regency. The steps in collecting data researchers also conducted validation tests of data obtained from various data sources/informants.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Organizational Stage for Village Fund Use Policy

The organizational stage in the context of village community empowerment is the process of organizing and preparing human resources, institutions, and work mechanisms that will be used in implementing empowerment programs. At this stage, the village government and the community form activity groups, appoint activity implementers, and determine the roles of each party to ensure program implementation is carried out according to objectives. Good organization allows for synergy between various elements of the village community, including community leaders, women's groups, youth, and other village institutions.

An interview with the Village Head of Sungai Ringin, Sekadau Hilir District, regarding the mechanism for organizing village fund use policies for village community empowerment stated that: The process of planning Village Fund use policies begins with a village deliberation involving various community elements, such as community leaders, neighborhood associations (RT/RW), the Village Consultative Body (BPD), and women's representatives. In this forum, we identify priority village needs covering the areas of development and community empowerment. The results of these deliberations are then incorporated into the Village Government Work Plan (RKPDs). After the work plan is developed, we establish priority programs for empowerment, such as skills training, assistance for village MSMEs, agriculture, and other social activities. These programs are determined during the Village Development Planning Meeting (Musrenbangdes) and ratified through the Village Budget (APBDes).

Village Funds are a crucial instrument for community development and empowerment at the village level. Since the enactment of Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, village governments have broader authority to design and manage various programs aimed at improving the welfare of their communities. One of the primary focuses of Village Fund utilization, as stipulated in Sekadau Regent Regulation Number 83 of 2023 concerning Technical Guidelines for the Use of Village Funds for the 2024 Fiscal Year, is for community empowerment activities, which include increasing the capacity, skills, and economic independence of village residents.

In Sungai Ringin Village, Sekadau Hilir District, Sekadau Regency, the process of organizing the Village Fund utilization policy was carried out in a participatory and structured manner, involving various elements of the village government, village institutions such as the Village Consultative Body (BPD), community leaders, and community groups. This process includes not only program planning and implementation but also ongoing evaluation to ensure that the implemented policies truly have a positive impact on the community. Through good organization, the Village Fund utilization policy is expected to be a driving force for community empowerment, strengthen local potential, and reduce dependence on assistance from outside the village.

2. Interpretation Stage of Village Fund Use Policy

The interpretation stage is a crucial part of the evaluation and understanding process of village fund use policies, particularly in the context of community empowerment. At this stage, various data and information obtained from the implementation process are analyzed in depth to uncover the meaning, effectiveness, and impact of the policies implemented. Interpretation focuses not only on

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figures and formal reports, but also encompasses an understanding of social realities, community participation, and the challenges and dynamics occurring on the ground.

Based on an interview with the Head of Sungai Ringin Village, regarding how to provide community understanding of the village fund use policy for community empowerment, he stated: "We start with a Hamlet Deliberation (Musdus) held by the Village Consultative Body (BPD) in each hamlet. Here, we gather community aspirations regarding needs and proposed empowerment programs. The results of the Musdus are then brought to the Village Deliberation (Musdes) for joint discussion, so that decisions reflect the community's desires and needs."

Based on this statement, it is clear that the Sungai Ringin Village Government implements a participatory approach to educating the community about village fund utilization policies. Through village meetings (Musdus), village meetings (Musdes), information publications, and training, the community is given the opportunity to play an active role in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of empowerment programs, with active involvement in every stage, from planning to evaluation. We also provide training and mentoring for community groups to ensure they understand and can effectively manage the empowerment program. With this approach, it is hoped that the community will not only become an object but also a subject in village development, thereby increasing transparency, accountability, and sustainability of community empowerment programs in Sungai Ringin Village.

Based on statements from the Sungai Ringin Village community, there are various views regarding the ability of policy implementers, in this case the Sungai Ringin Village government, to provide outreach regarding the use of village funds for community empowerment. Some residents admitted to not knowing the details of village funds and their use. Based on this statement, it is clear that the Sungai Ringin Village Government implements a participatory approach to educating the community about village fund utilization policies. Through village meetings (Musdus), village meetings (Musdes), information publications, and training, the community is given the opportunity to play an active role in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of empowerment programs, with active involvement in every stage, from planning to evaluation. We also provide training and mentoring for community groups to ensure they understand and can effectively manage the empowerment program. With this approach, it is hoped that the community will not only become an object but also a subject in village development, thereby increasing transparency, accountability, and sustainability of community empowerment programs in Sungai Ringin Village.

Based on statements from the Sungai Ringin Village community, there are various views regarding the ability of policy implementers, in this case the Sungai Ringin Village government, to provide outreach regarding the use of village funds for community empowerment. Some residents admitted to not knowing the details of village funds and their use. This indicates that the village government's outreach efforts have not been effective or have not reached all levels of society. The Sungai Ringin Village Government has not conducted regular outreach efforts and utilized various communication methods, such as face-to-face meetings, posting information in public places, and using social media. As a result, the community will have difficulty understanding the purpose of village funds and actively participating in the empowerment programs being implemented.

In the context of village development, community participation is not merely complementary but a key force in determining the direction and form of policies, including the use of village funds. Community involvement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of policies is a crucial foundation for realizing effective and sustainable empowerment programs. Ideally, policies on the use of village funds for empowering village communities should emerge from open dialogue between the village government and the community.

3. Village Fund Policy Application Stage

The application or implementation stage is the core of the policy implementation process, where previously formulated plans and policies are realized in the form of concrete activities on the ground. In the context of the village fund policy, this stage determines the success of empowerment programs aimed at improving the welfare and capacity of village communities in Sungai Ringin Village. The application/implementation of the village fund policy is carried out through various community empowerment programs, including skills training, business capital assistance, strengthening community institutions, and building facilities to support village economic activities.

Based on an interview with the Village Head of Sungai Ringin, Sekadau Hilir District, regarding the concrete application/implementation of the Village Fund policy in the community empowerment program in Sungai Ringin Village, he stated that: the initial stage of implementing the Village Fund policy in village community empowerment begins with a participatory and open planning process through the Village Deliberation (Musdes). In the Musdes, the community is given the opportunity to express their needs and propose programs that they believe will be most beneficial for empowerment. Furthermore, we always start with a Village Deliberation (Musyawarah Desa), involving all community elements, such as community leaders, the Village Consultative Body (BPD), neighborhood association (RT), village cadres, and women's groups.

Based on interviews, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Village Fund policy in Sungai Ringin Village is carried out concretely and structured through participatory planning stages through the Musdes (Village Deliberation), the preparation of the Village Work Plan (RKPDs) and Village Budget (APBDs) based on needs, and the implementation of concrete and targeted

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empowerment programs. The Village Head of Sungai Ringin demonstrates a strong commitment to using the Village Fund as a tool for community empowerment, not only for infrastructure but also to directly improve the capacity and well-being of residents.

Negative impacts or obstacles experienced by the Sungai Ringin Village community in implementing the Village Fund policy include: a lack of equitable distribution of information and access to the program, especially for residents in outlying areas or those not actively involved in village activities. The training program lacks sustainability because it is not accompanied by business mentoring, technical guidance, or marketing assistance. Furthermore, the selection of program participants is not transparent, which can lead to jealousy or dissatisfaction among community groups in Sungai Ringin.

The implementation of the Village Fund policy for empowering village communities, as stipulated in Sekadau Regent Regulation Number 83 of 2023, involves five key stages: planning, fund allocation, activity implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting and accountability. Each stage focuses on empowering village communities by prioritizing transparency, accountability, and active community participation in every process. Village community empowerment is the primary focus of this policy, with the aim of improving welfare and reducing poverty through efficient fund management. Strict oversight and transparent reporting are crucial to ensure the Village Fund's use maximizes its impact on the community.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis and discussion of the research focus, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The organizational stage of implementing the Village Fund policy for community empowerment in Sungai Ringin Village, Sekadau Hilir District, has not been implemented optimally, particularly in terms of involving all elements of the village community in the planning and implementation process. Limited human resources, both from the village government and the community, are one of the factors hindering effective organization.
2. The interpretation stage, or understanding, of the implementation process of the Village Fund policy for community empowerment in Sungai Ringin Village, Sekadau Hilir District, has not been implemented optimally because not many parties involved in Village Fund management, both from the village government and the community, still lack a thorough understanding of the technical provisions in Sekadau Regent Regulation Number 83 of 2023. This leads to difficulties in interpreting and implementing the existing technical instructions.
3. The application/implementation stage in the implementation of the policy on the use of village funds in empowering village communities in Sungai Ringin Village, Sekadau Hilir District has not been implemented optimally, although there are clear guidelines in Sekadau Regent Regulation Number 83 of 2023, its implementation is still not running optimally. Obstacles encountered include a lack of coordination between the village government and other related parties, as well as obstacles in administrative management that cause activities not to run according to plan.

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