

Evaluation of the Implementation of Reserve Component Assignments as Graduate Drivers of Indonesian Development in the Free Nutritional Meal Program

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ABSTRACT: This study evaluates the implementation of the Reserve Component (Komcad), which acts as the Indonesian Development Driver (SPPI) in supporting the Free Nutritious Meal Program. This program is a strategic government initiative to improve the nutritional quality of the community, particularly schoolchildren, and supports the achievement of sustainable development goals in health and food security. The study used qualitative methods with a descriptive evaluative approach using the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) model. Data were obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation studies with Komcad personnel, stakeholders, and program beneficiaries. The results indicate that Komcad's involvement has a positive contribution to the distribution of nutritious food, nutrition education, and cross-sector coordination. However, challenges remain, including budget constraints, inter-agency coordination, and the need for increased human resource capacity. These findings emphasize the importance of optimizing Komcad's role through increased training, strengthened regulations, and cross-sector synergy to maximize program effectiveness

KEYWORD: Reserve Component, Indonesian Development Driver (Penggerak Sarjana), Free Nutritious Meal Program, Evaluation, NVivo, Qualitative.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Free Nutritious Meal Program is a strategic initiative of the Indonesian government to improve the nutritional quality of the community, particularly elementary and secondary school children. This program aligns with the national development agenda to address stunting, improve nutritional status, and support the achievement of sustainable development goals in public health and welfare (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023; WHO, 2021). Nutrition interventions through the provision of healthy meals in schools have been shown to have a positive impact on student concentration, cognitive development, and academic achievement (Rahmawati & Setiawan, 2023).

Therefore, this program not only impacts health but also improves the quality of Indonesia's human resources. Despite this program's noble goals, its implementation faces several complex challenges. One key issue is the limited real-time data on target groups, particularly pregnant women and toddlers, which has resulted in suboptimal distribution of nutritional assistance (Bappenas, 2023). Furthermore, logistical issues and budget constraints are also inhibiting factors that can impact the program's sustainability (Fauzan, 2021). Coordination between agencies, both at the central and regional levels, still needs to be strengthened to ensure more equitable and targeted distribution of nutritious food. In this context, the role of the Reserve Component (Komcad), composed of undergraduates and members of the Indonesian Development Drivers (SPPI) program, is crucial.

As young people equipped with basic military and leadership training, Komcad-SPPI is expected to become development agents that can support the effective implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (Nugroho, 2022; Yuliana et al., 2023). Their involvement has the potential to strengthen cross-sector coordination, provide technical assistance in the field, and educate the public about the importance of balanced nutrition. However, the effectiveness of Komcad-SPPI's role in this social development context has rarely been comprehensively studied. The main challenges faced are limited human resource capacity, inter-institutional connectivity, and the need for strategies to optimize Komcad's role in supporting national food policy. Most previous studies have focused on Komcad within the framework of defense and security, leaving their contribution to the social development sector relatively unexplored (Hidayat et al., 2023; Aditya & Lestari, 2024). Therefore, this study is crucial for providing a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness, constraints, and strategies for strengthening Komcad's role as development-driving scholars in the Free Nutritional Meal Program.

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Although various previous studies have examined the effectiveness of nutritious food programs in improving the nutritional status of schoolchildren, most have focused on food distribution, logistics, and the role of local governments (Rahmawati & Setiawan, 2023; Sari & Prasetyo, 2024). Studies on the contribution of non-governmental actors, particularly the Reserve Component (Komcad), have been relatively limited. However, the presence of Komcad, who have received national defense training and are placed in the Indonesian Development Drivers (SPPI) program, opens up new opportunities for integrating defense with social development (Hidayat et al., 2023). Therefore, research is needed that specifically evaluates the effectiveness of Komcad's involvement in supporting the success of the Free Nutritious Meal Program.

Furthermore, previous studies tend to focus on Komcad solely from a national security perspective, without linking it to their role in developing food security and community welfare (Widodo, 2023; Aditya & Lestari, 2024). This lack of in-depth research creates a knowledge gap regarding how Komcad can be optimally empowered in national-scale social programs. This research aims to fill this gap by examining the effectiveness, constraints, and strategies for optimizing the role of Komcad as academics driving development. Thus, the research findings are expected to provide academic contributions as well as practical recommendations for policymakers.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative, descriptive, and evaluative approach to analyze the implementation of the Reserve Component (Komcad) as the Indonesian Development Driver (SPPI) in the Free Nutritional Meal Program. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness, challenges, and strategies for optimizing Komcad's role in the context of social development. The evaluation model used is CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product), which is considered relevant for assessing the policy context, resources, implementation process, and program outcomes (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). Data collection techniques were conducted through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation studies. Research informants included Komcad-SPPI personnel, officials at the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Social Affairs, local governments, and program beneficiaries.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research findings indicate that the Reserve Component (Komcad) assigned as the Indonesian Development Drivers (SPPI) contributed significantly to the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meals Program, particularly in food distribution and nutrition education. Komcad-SPPI members acted as field facilitators, ensuring that nutritious food reached target groups, such as elementary and secondary school students. This finding aligns with a study by Rahmawati and Setiawan (2023), which emphasized the importance of involving non-governmental actors in reducing distribution disparities in remote areas. The presence of Komcad-SPPI strengthened local capacity to reach previously inaccessible target communities.

However, this study identified structural challenges that impacted the effectiveness of program implementation. One major obstacle was limited budget and supporting facilities, which impacted program sustainability, particularly in areas with limited infrastructure. This reinforces Fauzan's (2021) finding that the success of the free nutritious food policy is highly dependent on the availability of adequate financial resources and logistical support. Furthermore, cross-agency coordination between the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health, and local governments remains suboptimal, often leading to overlapping roles and slow decision-making.

Regarding the role of the Komcad-SPPI, this study found that although they have basic military and leadership training, their capacity in social program management still needs improvement. Hidayat et al. (2023) emphasized that Komcad requires additional, more contextual training to be effective in social development programs. In the context of the Free Nutritional Meal Program, skills such as logistics management, public communication, and basic nutrition are urgently needed. This limited capacity hinders optimizing Komcad's role as a development agent in the community.

In addition to internal challenges, external factors also contribute to the varied public acceptance of Komcad's involvement. In some regions, communities have shown positive acceptance and view Komcad as role models who help facilitate government programs. However, in other regions, resistance persists due to a lack of public understanding of Komcad's dual role as part of both defense and social development. This finding aligns with Yuliana et al. (2023), who demonstrated that the effectiveness of community empowerment programs is strongly influenced by the level of trust and participation of local communities.

Overall, this study confirms that the Reserve Component-SPPI (Komcad-SPPI) has strategic potential as a driver of development, particularly in supporting food security through the Free Nutritional Meal Program. However, optimizing their role requires a comprehensive strategy involving capacity building, regulatory strengthening, and cross-sector synergy. The findings of this study also expand the academic discourse on the defense-development nexus, which has previously been discussed primarily in a purely military context (Widodo, 2023). Thus, this study provides a new contribution to understanding how defense instruments can be leveraged to support social development and the achievement of sustainable development goals in Indonesia.

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Based on context analysis, this study found that the Free Nutritional Meal Program has strong relevance to community needs in addressing nutrition issues, particularly stunting and national food security. However, the policy for involving the Reserve Component (Komcad) in this program has not been detailed in a comprehensive regulatory framework, so its implementation remains dependent on the initiatives of relevant agencies. This aligns with the findings of Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007) that the success of program evaluation is strongly influenced by a clear policy context and regulatory support. Thus, strengthening more structured regulations is necessary to ensure clear and sustainable legitimacy for Komcad's involvement.

Regarding input, process, and product aspects, this study shows that although Komcad-SPPI has basic capacity through military and leadership training, there are still limitations in human resources, budget, and supporting facilities. The implementation process in the field also faces obstacles such as suboptimal cross-sectoral coordination, which has resulted in irregular distribution of nutritious food in some areas. In terms of output (product), Komcad's involvement has been shown to make a positive contribution, increasing distribution reach, providing nutrition education, and supporting the program's success. However, these benefits are not fully maximized due to variations in input quality and process effectiveness. In accordance with the CIPP evaluation principle, program sustainability will be largely determined by more systematic improvements in input and process (Frye & Hemmer, 2012).

CONCLUSIONS

This study confirms that the involvement of the Reserve Component (Komcad) as the Indonesian Development Drivers (SPPI) plays a crucial role in supporting the success of the Free Nutritional Meal Program. Their presence has proven effective in strengthening the distribution of nutritious food, improving nutrition education in the community, and helping expand the program's reach to remote areas. This demonstrates that Komcad functions not only within the context of national defense but can also be an agent of social development, contributing to improving the quality of Indonesia's human resources.

However, the effectiveness of Komcad's role still faces various challenges, including budget constraints and infrastructure, and suboptimal cross-sectoral coordination. Analysis using the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) model indicates that program success is largely determined by clear regulations (context), adequate resources (input), smooth implementation mechanisms (process), and the quality of the resulting benefits (product). Therefore, an optimization strategy is needed through strengthening regulations, increasing Komcad's human resource capacity, and synergy between agencies to ensure program sustainability.

Academically, this research broadens the discourse on the defense-development nexus by emphasizing that the Reserves Command (Komcad) can play a dual role as both a defense reserve and a driver of development. Practically, the research findings provide recommendations for policymakers to design a more comprehensive strategy for involving the Reserves Command (Komcad) in social programs, particularly in the areas of food security and public health. Thus, the Free Nutritional Meal Program is not only a short-term solution to nutritional problems but also a long-term investment for the realization of Indonesia Emas 2045.

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