

## **A Collaborative Approach in Women Empowerment: Experience from Garut Regency**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper discusses the collaborative governance process in empowering women in Garut Regency through the Integrated Program for Increasing the Role of Women Towards Healthy and Prosperous Families. This program is an annual routine program to increase the role of women in development in the village scope. This program involves various stakeholders, from elements of government, non-government organizations, the private sector, universities, and other elements of society. This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Data was collected by interviewing relevant informants and observing the target villages. The results show that this collaborative governance process has a strong impetus to increase women's participation. The main supporting factors for collaboration are leadership and shared goals from stakeholders. The next empowerment challenge is how to make women able to maintain their participation after the program ends.

Keywords: Collaborative governance, empowerment, women, village

### **INTRODUCTION**

In Indonesia, gender equity development is still a big challenge. Ideally, development does not only pay attention to aspects of achieving goals but also benefits men and women as part of community groups. The issue of gender disparity in development has been responded to through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which is a world development agreement in 2015 that leads to sustainable development. One of the goals is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (*Central Bureau of Statistics of Indonesia*, 2016).

To find out the current condition of women in development in Indonesia, we can use gender-based human development data released by the Indonesian Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection. The Human Development Index (HDI) in 2019 nationally stood at 71.92, and for male and female gender it was 75.96 and 69.18, respectively. The value of the Development Index of men and women according to the quality of education, health, and economy then produces a Gender Development Index (GDI) which shows the number 91 in 2019. Although this number is quite high and indicates that the achievement of women's development is almost the same as that of men, In-depth identification is needed to find out to what extent women can participate and receive benefits from development.

Then, if we look at the Gender Empowerment Index which measures women's active participation in the economic, political, and managerial fields, nationally in 2019 it was at 75. Based on data from the, there were only 5 provinces where the achievement of the Gender Empowerment Index is above the national average. This indicates that there are gaps in access, participation, and control between men and women in development in various regions.

In addition, if we look at the profile data of Indonesian Women in 2019 which was also released by the Indonesian Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, nationally there are still various inequalities related to women's achievements in various fields. For example, women's achievements in education, according to Susenas data (2018) that 93.99% of women aged 15 years and over are literate but still lower than men. Then, as many as 32.53% of women aged 15 years and over have the highest education at the high school level, and above women are still lagging compared to men.

Regarding the role of women in work, according to Sakernas data (2018), the male labor force participation rate is higher at 82.69% compared to 51.88% for women. And of the 17 main occupations, the majority of women work in three main occupations, namely agriculture/forestry/fishery, trade, and processing industry. In addition, the average monthly net salary of male workers is higher (3.06 million) than female workers (2.39 million).

Looking more deeply into gender issues in development, many phenomena are experienced by women as a result of gaps in development. Among them is the practice of early marriage as a result of low access to education, practices of violence, and various forms of subordination experienced by women in Indonesia. This practice still occurs in a small environment, namely the village. Kleden, (2010) revealed that gender inequality is more dominant in rural areas (Antaranews, 16/7/2010). The condition of gender inequality in rural communities is a result of the social construction of rural communities which tend to still marginalize women (Zulaikha, 2019). Then, rural areas with a very strong culture often harm women (Hemas, 2012). Therefore, responding to this, the Indonesian Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection in a Press Release Number: B-295/Set/Rokum/MP 01/11/2019 urges that villages must also pay attention to gender development through the creation of gender-responsive development plans.

Paying attention to women's problems and needs through empowering women in the village is an important issue. Tobirin et al., (2019) stated that women are also the key to the success of village development so both economically and socially, women must be empowered. In addition, women also have a lot of potentials that makes them need to contribute to development (Wiati, 2007). Efforts to empower women as a group that has been marginalized for a long time have been carried out so that women can have a better quality of life. Many government programs, both central and local governments, encourage efforts to empower women as a form of attention to the problems faced by women.

Garut Regency has a program called the Integrated Program for Increasing the Role of Women Towards Healthy and Prosperous Families (known as P2WKSS) which also seeks to respond to women's problems through empowering women at the village level. This program was initiated by the Office of Population Control, Family Planning, Women Empowerment, and Child Protection in Garut Regency. This program is often referred to as the "bedah desa" or "rempugan" program which involves various stakeholders collaborating. The involvement of various stakeholders outside the government is a way to accelerate the realization of empowered women starting from the village level. This program is an annual program so that each year one village will be selected according to certain criteria.

The collaboration process in this program is interesting to highlight, considering that along the way, this collaboratively implemented program encountered some challenges, especially regarding how to develop networks for collaboration. In addition, with various stakeholders and interests, developing activities that are integrated with the objectives of the

stakeholders is also not easy. Therefore, this study seeks to determine the collaboration process carried out, as well as to find out the factors that support the success of the collaboration.

## METHOD

To achieve these objectives, field research was carried out using a qualitative approach and descriptive method. Data was collected through interviews with informants from the Office of Population Control, Family Planning, Women's Empowerment, and Child Protection in Garut Regency, collaboration partners, and representatives of the Dano Village community. Dano Village, which is located in Leles District, is a target village for the Program for Increasing the Role of Women Towards Healthy and Prosperous Families in 2019. Then, data collection was also carried out through observations in the target villages as primary research data. While secondary data was obtained from documents related to research.

Various information that has been collected is then analyzed and reduced to obtain data that is both important and relevant to the research. Then, the process of presenting data is carried out to be able to describe the process of collaborating. The findings obtained with consistent information are then analyzed. Furthermore, the results of this study are expected not only to be useful in describing the collaboration process in women's empowerment programs but also to be information for improving the collaboration process for similar programs in Indonesia.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Encourage Participation to Empower Women

The Integrated Program for Increasing the Role of Women Towards Healthy and Prosperous Families in Garut Regency is a program initiated by the Office of Population Control, Family Planning, Women's Empowerment, and Child Protection. In 2019, the village chosen to be fostered was Dano Village, which is located in Leles District. The village selection was made based on the 2015 integrated database which states that Dano Village is one of 10 villages in Garut Regency with a very poor welfare rating. Dano village has a population of 8,555 people with a percentage of men 52% and women 48% with the majority of the population working as farmers and private employees (Family Data Collection, 2015). Then, Dano Village is located on the outskirts of Garut Regency which is directly adjacent to Bandung Regency with a percentage of poor households of 72% (Family Data Collection, 2015).

Through deepening the problems that occurred in Dano Village, it is known that some of the main problems of the community in the village, namely: (1) The level of community welfare are low; (2) The level of public education is low; (3) Unclean and unhealthy living behavior; (4) Damaged village infrastructure. Thus, it was decided that Dano Village became the target of the Program implementation in 2019 through Garut Regent Decree No: 411.4/KEP.634-DP2KBP3A/2018 concerning Determination of the Location of Assisted Villages in the Integrated Program for Increasing the Role of Women Towards Healthy and Prosperous Families in 2019. Then in the planning process of this program, there is the involvement of Working Groups in districts, sub-districts, and villages.

Four main programs have been implemented in Dano Village following the identification of the problems, namely: (1) Health Program; (2) Education Programs; (3) Women's Empowerment Program; (4) "Sekoper Cinta" Program. Each of these programs oversees various activities targeted at women and families. Thus, this program carries a mission to increase

women's participation so that women are empowered.

### Collaborative Governance Process

After identifying the problems and determining the plan of activities to be carried out in Dano Village, the Office of Population Control, Family Planning, Women's Empowerment, and Child Protection as the driving force for this program advocated for various potential partners to collaborate. Collaboration in development programs has a very high opportunity to be carried out because it is considered to be able to bring many positive things including increasing community participation, increasing mutual benefits, and developing relationships between the parties involved (Wanna & O'Flynn, 2008). Therefore, collaboration is not limited to stakeholders from the government, but also other elements.

Advocacy is carried out to obtain common views on the purpose of collaboration so that stakeholders can integrate their programs or activities with this program. It aims to make the workload lighter because it is done together and receives mutual benefits. The negotiation process between stakeholders is carried out to determine what contributions the stakeholders can make along with the allocation of resources. The negotiation process is crucial because the stakeholder's decision to collaborate is largely determined by this process. This is following what was stated by (Plotnikof, 2015) that collaboration is obtained through a complex process of communication and negotiation so that a relationship is established.

In addition, an appeal from the regional head is also needed because it can encourage elements of local government organizations in the Garut Regency to participate. From the entire advocacy process, a collaboration was formed in the Integrated Program for Increasing the Role of Women Towards Healthy and Prosperous Families which includes elements of the government, non-government organizations, the private sector, regional companies, universities, and other community elements. Below is a list of stakeholders involved in the Program.

**Table 1.** Stakeholders involved in the Program

Category	Stakeholders
Government	Health Service, Family Welfare Development Team, Office of Religious Affairs, Religious Court, Integrated Service Center for Women and Children Empowerment, Department of Population and Civil Registration, BAZNAS, Public Works and Public Housing Service, West Java Provincial Government, Dano Village Government, Library and Public Service Office Regional Archives, Food Security Service, Agriculture Service, Fisheries and Livestock Service, Social Service, Village Midwife, District Government, Dharma Wanita Garut Regency, Manpower and Transmigration Service, Industry and Trade Service, Tourism Office
NGO	Indonesian Doctor's Wives Association, APPI, Indonesian Women's Sports Association, Elderly Institutions, Semak Foundation
Privat Sector/Regional Companies	PT. SMI, Klinik Cisanca, PT. Herlina Citra Pratama, Bank BJB, PT. Tama Coklat Indonesia

Universities	STKS Bandung, Institut Pertanian Bogor, Universitas Garut
Communities	Community Group (BKB, BKR, BKL, PIK-R, UPPKS Melati), Pos KB dan Sub Pos KB, Volunteer, Individual Non-Governmental Assistance

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Source: 2019 Program Report

Each stakeholder then contributes to various activities in the four planned programs. Health Program, implemented through Family planning counseling activities, environmental health, prevention of stunting, prevention of early marriage, Posyandu services for children and toddlers, Posyandu for the Elderly, Formation of Family Planning Villages, medical equipment assistance, construction of health buildings, environmental management.

Education Program, implemented through Establishment of a child-friendly village, "Ngabaso": Ngabring ka Sakola (Together to school), construction of preschool/kindergarten/elementary school buildings, assistance for school cleaning equipment, land grants, assistance for library books and shelves.

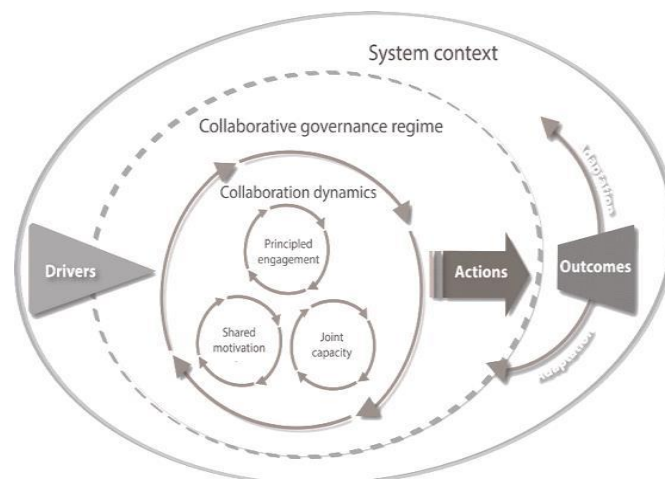
Women's Empowerment Program, implemented through Women's cooperative assistance, cooking utensils assistance, vegetable, and fruit seed assistance, fish seed assistance, pet animal (sheep) assistance, various counseling, and training activities for women (sewing, product packaging, handicraft businesses), house construction assistance, construction of drainage, construction of toilets, construction of boreholes, construction of household sewers, renovation of mosques, construction of Bale Sawala Melati.

"Sekoper Cinta" Program, implemented through the Formation of working groups, training, and coaching, family relations training, disaster management training.

From the list of activities, it can be seen that efforts have been made to empower women as well as to increase women's participation in development. Women in the village are equipped with various things to support their lives, from aspects of health, physical, economic, and social development. Not only that but the activities are also directed at improving family welfare and improving family life in Dano Village. These activities are organized by stakeholders under their respective fields of duty in a total period of less than one year.

### **Analysis of Collaboration Supporting Factors**

The Integrated Program for Increasing the Role of Women Towards Healthy and Prosperous Families is an annual program that involves various stakeholders to contribute to empowering women in the village. From the previous description, it can be seen an overview of the process of implementing the program. To deepen the understanding of the dynamics of the collaboration process, the conceptual framework of the collaborative process which is one of the dimensions of the collaboration model according to Emerson and Nabatchi (2015) is considered relevant to analyze what happened to the program so that reasons, behaviors, and other elements in collaboration can be known.



**Figure 1. Emerson and Nabatchi Collaborative Governance Model**  
Source: Emerson dan Nabatchi (2015)

Emerson & Nabatchi (2015) explain that a collaborative process can occur with three things, namely the desire to be involved, the existence of shared motivation, and the capacity to take joint action. Furthermore, these three things result in collaborative action to achieve common goals.

The desire to be involved, according to Emerson & Nabatchi (2015) can be obtained through discovery, definition, deliberation, and determination. It can provide impetus and motivation to unite action. In the context of the program, advocacy and negotiation are carried out as a way to develop networks and communication to encourage the desire to be involved in the program. This communication is also developed to obtain the same view regarding the problem as well as develop joint problem-solving.

Then in the capacity to take joint action, Emerson & Nabatchi (2015) state that four elements can influence, namely the existence of procedures and institutional arrangements, leadership, and resources. In the context of this program, to carry out joint action, stakeholders from the government integrate the existing programs in each local government organization with this program. Then, for stakeholders from the private sector, communication is carried out so that they are willing to contribute through the Corporate Social Responsibility program. For other elements such as NGOs and universities, communication is directed at developing activities that are under their field of study or expertise. Meanwhile, other community elements are also invited to contribute voluntarily to this program to support village progress.

The difficult thing is to ensure that this program is part of common interest to empower the community so that synergy and mutual concern are needed. In this program, the desire to be involved in collaborating does not come on the initiative of the stakeholders themselves so that the strength of the relationship is not too strong. Whereas the strength of this relationship will affect the sustainability of the collaboration. In addition, this advocacy and negotiation process also requires a considerable amount of time, while the program must be running within the year.

The involvement of elements of regional leadership is also a fairly effective way to increase the involvement of stakeholders. By being involved in collaboration in this program, local government organizations can allocate their budgets to fund activities under their duties and functions. Likewise, stakeholders from other elements use their resources to contribute. This can

be a force for collective action.

The many activities in this program have encouraged community involvement. This is supported by the high enthusiasm of the village community to participate in its activities. Not a few people feel helped by various activities. It is not only women who receive the benefits but more broadly, the family. However, the limited scope of program implementation has created jealousy from other village communities.

From the description above, it can be seen that the collaborative process in this program is influenced by the desire of stakeholders to be involved, the existence of shared motivation, and ownership of the capacity to take joint action. However, the existence of these factors is still very much dominated by government actors as the driving force to realize collaborative governance.

## CONCLUSION

Empowering women as a group in society is an effort to realize the development of gender equality. The Integrated Program for Increasing the Role of Women Towards Healthy and Prosperous Families is a program to empower women in villages by involving stakeholders to collaborate. This collaboration process occurs through efforts to encourage stakeholder involvement. Advocacy and negotiation complemented by the influence of regional head leadership are factors that support collaboration. Furthermore, the stakeholders took joint action to empower women and increase women's participation.

Future challenges to make empowerment programs effective, it is necessary to increase the strength of stakeholder relations so that it is not only limited to carrying out joint activities. In addition, the time-limited program also has the challenge of enabling women to be truly independent after the program ends. Then, to ensure that women in the village can continue to participate in the development process, the village government plays an important role in providing space and opportunities.

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