

AN ANALYSIS OF LOCAL COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM: A CASE OF SOTA DISTRICT OF MERAUKE, PAPUA

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ABSTRACT: This study contains the report on the implementation of community-based economy empowerment program at special areas and underdeveloped villages focused on the policy implementation of SVDP Program in the empowerment of local community economy at the district of Sota, Merauke regency, Papua. The objective of the study was to find and analyze information about (1) the implementation of SVDP program, (2) factors playing roles in the implementation of SVDP program, and (3) the role of SVDP program in the practices of community-based economy empowerment. Data were collected by means of observation and interview. Findings showed that program implementation was in line with the theory and that infrastructure and facilities were insufficient, and hence inhibited program implementation. Program implementation was not directly related to the enhancement of (the practices of) community-based economy.

Keywords: Economic Empowerment; Local Community; Papua.

1. BACKGROUND

Local community empowerment, including economic empowerment, is a priority in a lot of countries. Empowering poor people and marginalized communities, improving local governance, providing adequate public infrastructure and services, and enabling dynamic, equitable private sector growth are all required to meet the MDGs [1] and it is formulated as the public planning and policy. Good public planning and policy has been believed to bring about increasingly equal economic development of the community. Economic development-oriented policies decrease striking differences between poor and rich community members or areas.

Empowerment only happens locally: poor people live their lives at the local level, this is where they engage on a daily basis with the state, public services, markets and the political system. Their empowerment requires participation and accountability in local governance and decision-making effective and inclusive local citizenship [2].

In Indonesia, one of national community empowerment programs was “Program Nasional Pemberdayaan Masyarakat (PNPM) Mandiri” [3] which can be translated as National Community Empowerment Program (NCEP) “Mandiri”. “Mandiri” means self-help and this program can entirely be means as a national empowerment program to make poor people and marginalized community be “mandiri” or can self-help them self by their own effort. This program contains several programs that can be categorized by the community empowerment activities such as NCEP Rural and NCEP Urban (for poor people in the rural and urban area), NCEP SPADA (support the poor and disadvantaged areas), NCEP RIS (Rural Infrastructure), NCEP RISE (Regional Infrastructure, Social and Economic), and the NCEP for underdeveloped villages in special areas in Papua.

These programs were intended to accelerate the growth of urban, rural, and underdeveloped areas, and at the same time to reduced the gap between the rich and the poor although, empowerment processes are highly political, can have adverse effects, can be dangerous, can be corrupted or can simply fail. None of that should prevent donors from

engaging in processes that aim to bring about empowerment. It is important to always bear in mind that if successful, empowerment processes can also be life changing, and the beginning of wider process that can lift people out of poverty [1].

There was not many reports on implementation of NCEP-Mandiri programs in Papua. Few among others were written by Intan Sumiyati [4]: NCEP-Mandiri Rural, Febriyana Katharina [5]: NCEP-Mandiri Urban, and Suebu [6]: NCEP-Mandiri for underdeveloped villages in special areas in Papua. The three have not studied the relationship of the programs with the sustainable community-based economy empowerment, where as community-based economy empowerment is one of the key factors in reducing economic gaps.

This study contains the report on the implementation of community-based economy empowerment program at special areas and undedeveloped villages in Papua, Indonesia.

2. THE SVDP PROGRAM

Papua province’s government synergized NCEP Mandiri with provincial government program utilizing the Special Autonomy Fund of Papua Province in its implementation. This synergized program was named “NCEP Mandiri RESPEK”. RESPEK is Indonesian abbreviation of “Rencana Strategis Pembangunan Kampung” that can be translate as “The Strategic Village Development Plan (SVDP)”. It is a kind of community empowerment program based in villages and was initiated by the Papuan provincial government in 2007.

This program need fully participation from the villagers. It can be said that participation can lead to empowerment and it is important to discuss its underlying notion of power. Hence this study describes the concepts of power and empowerment in the community development activities [7].

In the Technical Guidelines and Explanation of PNPM Mandiri RESPEK (2008), the general aim writes: “To continuously accelerate copying with poverty towards the economically autonomous communities by means community capacity and institutions building in order to realize the main

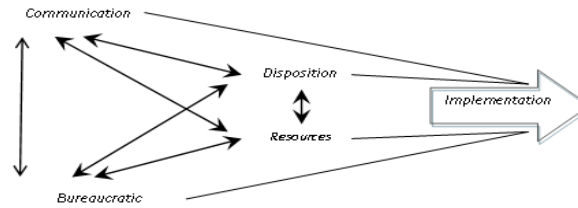


Fig.1:Public Policy Implementation Model according to Edward III.

Programs of the development concept, human centered in: food and nutrient, health, education, community economy, gender mainstream, and basic infrastructure.

SVDP program was *bottom-up* in its approach, program and financial activities started from villages. Provincial government just provided finance, according to the proposal of the community. The provincial government allocated some Direct Grant for Financial Assistance to every village in Papua as much as IDR.100,000,000.00 (one hundred million rupiahs), and as much as IDR.100,000,000.00 (one hundred million rupiahs) too for every district as an operational fund[8].

In the process of SVDP implementation, villages were determined as the program focus (in program planning, implementation, and control). Community was the policy maker, decision maker, and the main actor of the poverty elimination. SVDP started in 2007, and 28 regencies and 385 districts were included. After six years of implementation the number of the poor population in Papua decreased by 10.41%.

The main priorities of SVDP programs were of (1) Improvement of Nutrient; (2) Improvement of Basic Education; (3) Basic Health Care; (4) Increase in Jobs; and (5) Basic Infrastructure.

According to Papua's governor's decree No. 180 Year 2012 [8] Merauke regency received direct grants of IDR 21,139,100,000.-. From that, Sota District received IDR661,915,000.- to be used to finance the SVDP programs in five villages. However, the implementation was not optimal, because there were problems faced in education, health, community-based economy empowerment, and improvement of infrastructure.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The present study focused on gathering information to be analyzed to find out: (1) implementation of SVDP program, (2) factors playing roles in the implementation of SVDP programs, and (3) the role of SVDP programs to increase the autonomy of community-based economy in Sota District. The data collection and analysis on the three components were done in the following ways.

3.1 SVDP program Implementation

Program implementation is one of the step in the process of public policy making [9]. Information on the process of SVDP implementation was collected by means of observation and interview. The question used as reference was "How has

the implementation of the SDVP program been done in accordance with these following order?"

- (i) Program Initiation
- (ii) Formation of Program implementing Organisation
- (iii) Activity implementation

3.2 Influencing Factors

Influencing factors were identified using the model of public policy implementation [10] shown by Figure 1. Information from the field was collected by ways of observation and interview to actors and informants.

Based on the model above, the influencing factors than be analyzed as follows:

(i) *Communication.*

Three issues were the focus of the communication: 1) Transmission; 2) Consistence; and 3) Clarity.

(ii) *Resources*

The focus of resources comprises: 1) Human resource (HR); it does not matter how much information we have if the quality of HR is poor. It does not matter how clear and consistent the conditions and references of the policy if the ability of the implementer in the implementation is poor, the program implementation will not be effective and successful. Certain stages in the implementation process is subject to the availability of HR with sufficient ability in information[11]. 2) Public facilities; infrastructure and facilities are helpful in accelerating the process of activity implementation, so that program implementation will be efficient.

(iii) *Attitudes of Implementers*

The attitude of implements to the effects of implementers on effective implementation of policy is supported by public support , attitudes and resources of constituency groups, support from sovereigns, commitment and leadership skill of implementing officials [12]

(iv) *Bureaucratic Structure*

Bureaucratic Structure reflects the characteristics of the organization's work relationship flow and relationship structure. Bureaucratic structure organizes the human resource in their activities to achieve objectives. The focus of analysis of the bureaucratic structure in this study was on the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)and Fragmentation. These focuses contain the basic characteristics of the bureaucracy in the organization of implementing policy. One of the characteristics of the bureaucracy is disposition that could be possessed by policy implementers, including being committed, honest, communicative, intelligent, and democratic[10].

3.3 Economy Empowerment Practice

The main objective of the SVDP program was the empowerment of community-based economy. Whatever the program and however good the program implementation will not be of any effect if the empowerment of the community-based economy has not been achieved. The relation between community economy empowerment program and practice were based on five aspects of the economy empowerment approach[12]. The five aspects are (1) assistance in rolling capital; (2) assistance in production infrastructure development and marketing; (3) capacity building of local business organization; (4) strengthening and establishment of business partnership; and (5) facilitation by the assistant. Information Implementation about SVDP program related to the empowerment of community-based economy was obtained by way of observation and interview to the implementer and informant.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study focused on the finding of information and the analysis of: (1) implementation of SVDP program, (2) factors playing roles in the implementation of SVDP program, and (3) the role of SVDP program in improving the community-based economy in Sota district. The findings are presented subsequently as follows.

4.1 Implementation of SVDP Program

The implementation process of SVDP programs in Sota District was as follows:

(i) Program Initiation

Process was done through several stages of communicating of the main parts of the program. Community figures started initiatives in internal meetings at the village level. The results of the meeting were taken to the board of the program at district level for further identification. At this stage, the form of program, recipients, and the amount received was already fixed and formulated before further operational implementation took place.

(ii) Formation of Implementing Organization of the Program

Due to the "bottom-up" characteristics of SVDP program, the primary implementer of the program, was the member of village community as decision makers. The district and regency implementers played the role of assistants, supervisors, and mentors. The lack of capable personnel available to fill the village board of organization was the problem since the community members were dominantly farmers and gatherers.

(iii) Activity Implementation Stage

Activities were done according to the operational, technical guidelines (PTO) for SVDP program, containing nine stages: 1) district meeting, 2) village meeting for publicity 3) planning meeting with the community, 4) village meeting for implementation preparation, 5) funds liquidation mechanism, 6) building infrastructure/facilities, 7) expansion of business opportunities, 8) village meeting for accountability, and 9) village meeting for transfer.

4.2 Influencing factors

The influencing factors be analyzed were 1) communication; 2) resources; 3) implementers attitudes, 4) bureaucratic structure, and 5) sociopolitical and economic conditions.

(i) Communication

These issues of communication were focused. 1) *Transmission*; it was found that the transmission of information from policy holders to target groups was not optimal due to infrastructure and transportation condition and community members whose livelihood requiring them to frequently stay in the forest. 2) *Consistency*; technical guidelines and other policies were consistently implemented, in spite of adjustment due to situational condition. 3) *Clarity*; information about the program was clearly publicized. The majority of the informants thought that they understood the objective, scope, and target of the program.

(ii) Resources

With regard to resources, three things were focused: 1) *Human Resources*; quantitatively, there were sufficient people for program implementation. However, qualitatively, their level of education was low. 2) *Public facilities*; existing infrastructure and facilities did not support the activities optimally, and this inhibited program implementation. 3) *Funds allocation*; as presented in Table 1, all funds were utilized for public facilities, education and health, production facilities/ infrastructure, business capital, etc., but none were for activities related to economic empowerment.

(iii) Attitude of Implementers

The implementers had strong desire to make the program succeed. This was indicated by rapid publicity they did. The strong desire was inhibited by limited facilities and means of transportation.

(iv) Bureaucratic Structure

Bureaucratic Structure focused on two things: 1) *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)*; SOP was implemented and publicized with modification according to local needs. Because of modification of standard, implementers were more responsive to various local needs, which affected the success in implementation. 2) *Fragmentation*; direct involvement of the officials reduced fragmentation. Communication was really needed to avoid coordination problems. It was also found that despite the absence of fragmentation of coordination and accountability, the top coordination and accountability was in the hand of Papua Province not in the hands of stakeholders implementing SVDP program in Sota district.

(v) Sociopolitical and economic environment

1) *Socio-culture condition*; *kanum*, 'obeying the elder' as a cultural value of the society became a supporting factor for smooth implementation of SVDP. Approaches to religious and social figures, village heads, and traditional figures contributed positively to the implementation of the program. Interviews with religious figures showed that the local cultural influence basically did not negatively affect the policy implementation. However, the implementation of projects in the form of grants has created new attitude, i.e. dependency. This indicates that government projects without competent assistants, will negatively affect the implementation. 2) *Economic condition*; community members were submissive

Table 1. Realisation of SVDP program funds based on District Sota Activities, year 2012

Group	Amount of Funds (IDR)	Percentage (%)	Remarks
Public infrastructure	1.364.594.200,-	77,98	completed
Education - Non infrastructure	101.496.000,-	5,80	completed
Health infrastructure	197.018.300,-	11,26	completed
Health – non infrastructure	86.891.500,-	4,96	completed
TOTAL	1.750.000.000,-	100,00	completed

to poverty. According to Kartasmita, poor communities need to be trusted to make decisions on what they think the best of them [14]. This became the reference of SVDP, which was “*bottom-up program*”. 3) The political condition of the community; the characteristics of the local political structure did not affect SVDP implementation. The community focused on empowerment programs, since they needed help for empowerment. They focused on the proposal for empowerment, rather than on the who propose the program.

4.3 Economic empowerment practices

Only half of the implementation of SVDP in Sota related to economic empowerment was on infrastructure construction. Generally, the implementation of the program did not touch these five aspects: (1) continuous capital aids; (2) aids for the establishment of production infrastructure and marketing; (3) improvement of the capacity of local business institution; (4) establishment and of business partners; and (5) facilitation from the assistant

5. CONCLUSION

After studying the implementation of the SVDP program in the District of Sota, Merauke regency, Papua and its relation with community-based economy empowerment and influencing factors, it was found that the program implementer was able to implement the program, according to the theory, that is, based on these stages: initiating the program, forming the program implementer organization, and finally carrying out the activities.

In relation with community-based economy empowerment, the program implementation only reached the establishment of infrastructure. However, at the level of implementation, the program did not directly touch the five dimensions of economic empowerment: (1) continuous capital aids; (2) aids for the establishment of production infrastructure and marketing; (3) improvement of the capacity of the local business institution; (4) establishment and of business partners; and (5) facilitation from the assistant.

Dominant factors influencing the effective implementation of SVD Program were human resource (HR), and infrastructure and facilities. The number of HR was sufficient, but the level of education was low. With low levels of education, they could still implement the program in line with the theory, but the implementation was not effective and efficient. Infrastructure and facilities available were very limited. Limited transportation facilities, in particular, very much inhibit the program implementation.

Therefore, it is suggested that in the future, in the implementation of bottom-up programs, the government prioritize training for assistants for program implementation,

and prioritize the building of basic infrastructure and facilities by the government. It is also suggested that in the implementation of SVDP program, the government need to ask the implementer to pay attention to the five dimensions of the economic empowerment approach.

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