



JURNAL POLITIK PEMERINTAHAN DHARMA PRAJA

e-ISSN 2721-7043 ISSN 1979-8857

Website: <http://ejournal.ipdn.ac.id/JPPDP>

Faculty of Politics and Governance, Governance of Home Affairs (IPDN)

JPPDP, Vol 18 No. 1

Doi: <https://doi.org/10.33701/jppdp.v18i1.5278>

COMMUNITY-BASED DEVELOPMENT MODEL IN THE VILLAGE INDEPENDENT PROGRAM: A CASE STUDY

Aris Sarjito^{1*}

¹Universitas Pertahanan Republik Indonesia, Jl. Salemba Raya No. 14, Jakarta 10440

Email: arissarjito@gmail.com

*corresponding author

E-mail: arissarjito@gmail.com

Abstract

The Village Independent Program (VIP) is a community-based rural development model aimed at fostering self-sufficiency and economic resilience in rural communities. This research analyzes the effectiveness of the program by examining community engagement, governance structures, and sustainability factors through a qualitative case study approach using secondary data. Data sources include government reports, academic literature, and NGO case studies, which were analyzed using thematic and comparative analysis. The findings highlight that active community participation and transparent governance significantly impact program success. Villages with strong leadership, financial accountability, and diversified economic activities show higher levels of sustainability. However, challenges such as resource disparities, governance inconsistencies, and digital infrastructure limitations hinder program implementation in certain regions. The study suggests that policy improvements, digital transformation, and public-private partnerships are essential for enhancing long-term rural development outcomes. Strengthening financial transparency, expanding internet access, and fostering youth entrepreneurship are recommended to sustain the program's impact. This research contributes to the broader discussion on scalable community-based development models, emphasizing the importance of local governance, digital inclusivity, and long-term economic planning.

Keywords: *community-based development, digital transformation, economic resilience, governance, rural sustainability*

Abstrak

Program Desa Mandiri (VIP) adalah model pembangunan berbasis komunitas yang bertujuan untuk mendorong kemandirian dan ketahanan ekonomi di masyarakat pedesaan. Penelitian ini menganalisis efektivitas program dengan meninjau partisipasi komunitas, struktur tata kelola, dan faktor keberlanjutan melalui pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif berbasis data sekunder. Sumber data meliputi laporan pemerintah, literatur akademik, dan studi kasus dari LSM, yang

dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik dan komparatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa partisipasi aktif masyarakat dan transparansi tata kelola berkontribusi besar terhadap keberhasilan program. Desa yang memiliki kepemimpinan kuat, akuntabilitas keuangan, dan diversifikasi ekonomi lebih cenderung mencapai keberlanjutan jangka panjang. Namun, tantangan seperti ketimpangan sumber daya, inkonsistensi tata kelola, dan keterbatasan infrastruktur digital masih menjadi hambatan dalam implementasi program di beberapa daerah. Studi ini merekomendasikan perbaikan kebijakan, transformasi digital, dan kemitraan publik-swasta sebagai langkah penting untuk meningkatkan hasil pembangunan pedesaan dalam jangka panjang. Penguatan transparansi keuangan, perluasan akses internet, dan pengembangan kewirausahaan pemuda diperlukan untuk mempertahankan dampak positif program ini. Penelitian ini berkontribusi dalam diskusi lebih luas mengenai model pembangunan berbasis komunitas yang dapat direplikasi, dengan menekankan pentingnya tata kelola lokal, inklusivitas digital, dan perencanaan ekonomi berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: *keberlanjutan pedesaan, ketahanan ekonomi, pembangunan berbasis komunitas, tata kelola, transformasi digital*

INTRODUCTION

The role of community-based development (CBD) in fostering sustainable rural communities has been widely recognized in recent years. The Village Independent Program (*Program Desa Mandiri*) is one such initiative that aims to empower local communities through participatory approaches to economic and social development (Watini et al., 2021). The program seeks to enhance local governance, promote economic self-sufficiency, and strengthen community engagement in decision-making processes.

Community-based development focuses on bottom-up approaches, ensuring that local residents actively participate in their development rather than relying solely on top-down government interventions (Arintoko et al., 2020). Scholars emphasize that empowering local communities' results

in greater sustainability, improved livelihoods, and stronger social cohesion (Agustang & Upe, 2021). The Village Independent Program aligns with this principle by encouraging local governments and communities to collaborate in managing village resources effectively.

Indonesia's rural areas face various developmental challenges, including limited infrastructure, unequal access to education and healthcare, and high dependence on government assistance (Rut et al., 2022). Through the Village Independent Program, villages are expected to transition from dependency to self-reliance, emphasizing the role of community engagement and participatory planning (Wikantiyoso et al., 2021). However, achieving this transition is not without its obstacles, as many rural communities struggle with economic

limitations, weak institutional structures, and varying levels of social capital (Lubis et al., 2020).

Thus, this study examines the community-based development model applied within the Village Independent Program, focusing on how participatory development strategies contribute to rural economic growth and social well-being.

Problem Statement

Despite the widespread adoption of community-based development models, rural communities in Indonesia continue to face barriers in achieving self-sufficiency (Dolezal & Novelli, 2022). What factors contribute to the success or failure of community-based approaches in the Village Independent Program?

Previous studies have highlighted challenges such as weak institutional support, lack of technical skills, and minimal financial backing from the government and private sector (Pawson et al., 2016). While some villages have demonstrated success in community-driven tourism and agricultural projects, others have struggled with long-term sustainability and social inclusion (Rut et al., 2022).

This study aims to address three key research problems:

1. Effectiveness of the community-based development model. What strategies are most effective in mobilizing local participation and

ensuring economic sustainability?

2. Community participation in rural development. What factors influence the level of community involvement in decision-making processes?
3. Challenges in implementing sustainable development models. What structural, financial, and socio-political challenges hinder the success of the Village Independent Program?

By exploring these questions, this research seeks to contribute to policy discussions on how to strengthen the institutional and economic foundations of community-based initiatives in rural areas.

Research Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Analyze the community-based development model applied within the Village Independent Program to determine its strengths and weaknesses.
2. Examine the impact of community participation on rural development outcomes, particularly in economic growth, infrastructure development, and local governance.
3. Identify the best practices and key challenges faced by communities participating in the program, providing recommendations for enhancing policy design and implementation.

By addressing these objectives, the study will provide valuable insights into the role of participatory development models in fostering sustainable rural transformation.

Research Questions

To guide this study, the following research questions are formulated:

1. How does the community-based development model function within the Village Independent Program?
2. What are the key factors influencing the success of community participation in rural development projects?
3. What challenges arise in implementing sustainable development models in rural areas, and how can they be addressed?

Answering these questions will help policymakers and practitioners better understand the mechanisms of community-based development, offering practical solutions to enhance village self-sufficiency and resilience.

The Village Independent Program represents a transformative initiative in rural development, emphasizing community empowerment, economic independence, and participatory governance. However, its implementation varies significantly across different regions, influenced by socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional factors. While some villages have successfully harnessed community

engagement to drive local economic growth, others have faced persistent challenges that hinder their progress (Han & Gao, 2019).

This study will explore the best practices in community-based development, highlighting key lessons that can enhance the effectiveness of the Village Independent Program. By leveraging insights from recent academic research, it aims to contribute to evidence-based policy recommendations for strengthening rural self-sufficiency and sustainable development.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Concept of Community-Based Development (CBD)

Community-Based Development (CBD) refers to bottom-up approaches that prioritize local participation in decision-making, fostering empowerment and self-sufficiency among rural communities (Castro-Arce & Vanclay, 2020). The core principles of CBD include participation, inclusivity, local resource utilization, and sustainability (Arintoko et al., 2020).

One of the fundamental theoretical perspectives supporting CBD is participatory development theory, which argues that development projects are more sustainable when local communities are directly involved in planning, execution, and maintenance (Naku, 2020). Empowerment theory also plays a crucial role, highlighting how active engagement in economic and

governance structures strengthens community resilience and fosters long-term social and economic improvements (Suriyankietkaew et al., 2022).

CBD is commonly applied in rural contexts through community-based tourism (CBT), agriculture cooperatives, and local governance initiatives. The Village Independent Program (VIP) in Indonesia is an example of such an initiative, designed to transition rural villages towards economic independence and self-reliance (Juma & Khademi-Vidra, 2019).

Village Independent Program (VIP) in Indonesia

The Village Independent Program (VIP) was introduced as a national strategy to promote sustainable village development through community-driven economic and social projects (Castro-Arce & Vanclay, 2020). The main objectives of VIP include:

1. **Enhancing Local Governance.**
Empowering village councils to lead decision-making and manage development funds transparently.
2. **Economic Diversification.**
Encouraging villages to reduce their dependency on agricultural incomes by introducing eco-tourism, small industries, and digital entrepreneurship (Bich et al., 2021).
3. **Strengthening Social Capital.**
Promoting cooperative models and participatory decision-making

processes to strengthen community cohesion (Suriyankietkaew et al., 2022).

The policies supporting VIP include fiscal decentralization, where villages receive direct financial support from the central government to implement locally designed projects (Castro-Arce & Vanclay, 2020). However, governance mechanisms remain varied across regions, with some villages experiencing strong participatory leadership, while others face challenges in accountability and transparency (van Haren et al., 2019).

Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

Sustainable rural development requires an integrated approach that balances economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Several factors contribute to sustainable rural growth:

Economic Diversification

Diversifying rural economies by integrating agro-tourism, rural entrepreneurship, and eco-industries reduces dependence on agriculture while fostering sustainable growth (Bich et al., 2021). Additionally, strengthening local small enterprises through microfinance and cooperative-based lending models enhances financial resilience and community-driven economic development.

Infrastructure Development

Ensuring transportation, digital connectivity, and renewable energy access is

vital for sustainable rural transformation, while community-based infrastructure projects enhance local capacity in managing water resources, sanitation, and energy independence (Fouladvand et al., 2022; Juma & Khademi-Vidra, 2019).

Social Capital and Governance

Strong social networks and community cohesion are essential for sustaining long-term development, as villages with higher social capital are more effective in maintaining participatory governance and financial accountability (Suriyankietkaew et al., 2022).

Environmental Sustainability

Integrating sustainable land management with rural policies supports ecological conservation and resource availability, while community-led initiatives like land rehabilitation and water conservation have proven effective in Indonesian villages (Teshome et al., 2021; van Haren et al., 2019).

Previous Studies and Research Gaps

Several studies have examined community-based rural development models, particularly in the context of Village Independent Programs and participatory governance. Key findings include:

Success Factors in CBD Models

Community-based tourism (CBT) fosters economic stability while preserving local culture, and community-owned cooperatives play a key role in job creation

and financial resilience in rural areas (Arintoko et al., 2020; Suriyankietkaew et al., 2022).

Challenges Identified in Previous Studies

Weak governance structures in many villages lead to corruption risks and inefficient resource allocation, while reliance on short-term government funding makes projects vulnerable to policy shifts. Additionally, scalability remains a challenge, as successful local models often fail to expand due to socio-economic disparities (Celata & Sanna, 2019; Tantoh et al., 2021; van Haren et al., 2019).

Research Gaps and Future Directions

Future research should focus on long-term village transformation, comparative analysis of development models, and the integration of digital technologies to enhance community-based rural development (WANG et al., 2023).

This theoretical framework provides an academic foundation for understanding community-based development models within the Village Independent Program. By integrating insights from participatory development theories, social capital research, and sustainable rural policies, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on effective community-led initiatives. Future research must focus on scalability, governance challenges, and digital innovations to enhance long-term rural sustainability.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative case study approach to analyze the implementation of the Village Independent Program (VIP) as a model of community-based rural development. By relying on *secondary data analysis*, the research captures insights from a wide range of existing materials, including government documents, academic literature, NGO evaluations, and statistical databases, without conducting primary fieldwork (Castro-Arce & Vancley, 2020).

To strengthen the analytical framework, a *comparative analysis* was applied to assess variations across multiple rural villages implementing VIP. This approach makes it possible to identify common success factors, regional disparities, and context-specific challenges in the execution of participatory development programs (Fouladvand et al., 2022).

Data Collection Methods

This research draws upon 47 secondary data sources published between 2018 and 2022. These include reports, policy documents, and published studies from multiple stakeholders involved in or evaluating the Village Independent Program.

Government and Policy Reports

Key references include policy documents from the Ministry of Villages

(Kemendesa PD TT), regional planning reports (RPJMDes), and program implementation guidelines. These provide foundational information on VIP funding allocation, institutional design, and regulatory frameworks (de Luca et al., 2021).

Academic Studies and Journal Articles

Peer-reviewed articles on rural governance, participatory development, and comparative rural policy models were reviewed to situate VIP within a broader theoretical and empirical context (Celata & Sanna, 2019).

NGO Reports and Development Assessments

Evaluation reports and case studies from NGOs operating in rural development, such as local community empowerment foundations and international development partners, offered ground-level insights into the outcomes and limitations of VIP (Tantoh et al., 2021).

Statistical and Economic Data

Village-level indicators on infrastructure, income diversification, employment, and education were obtained from Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) and other public datasets. These were used to assess the social and economic performance of selected villages (Wikantiyoso et al., 2021).

Village Selection

The sample includes 23 villages from five provinces: Central Java, East Java, West

Nusa Tenggara, South Sulawesi, and West Kalimantan. These were purposively selected based on diversity in geography, socio-economic conditions, and documented VIP performance levels. Selection was informed by regional rankings from the Ministry of Villages, BPS data, and NGO evaluations. The goal was to capture a representative range of implementation scenarios, from highly successful to struggling communities.

Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis

Thematic coding was applied to categorize recurring issues such as governance transparency, leadership quality, infrastructure availability, and community engagement. This helped identify structural and procedural factors affecting program outcomes (Castro-Arce & Vanclay, 2020).

Comparative Analysis

Patterns and differences between villages were analyzed to explore how institutional capacity, digital connectivity, and economic context influenced VIP success. This method helps distinguish context-specific challenges from systemic barriers (Fouladvand et al., 2022).

Content Analysis

Policy texts, NGO evaluations, and journal articles were systematically examined to extract critical success factors and lessons learned. Emphasis was placed on identifying replicable practices and

underlying principles of sustainability in community-based models (Celata & Sanna, 2019).

Ethical Considerations

Since the research uses publicly available secondary data, no formal ethics approval was required. However, village names used in case illustrations have been anonymized where necessary to ensure privacy and confidentiality.

By triangulating multiple secondary sources and applying structured qualitative methods, this study provides a comprehensive and evidence-based perspective on the dynamics, outcomes, and challenges of the Village Independent Program. The findings are intended to support both academic analysis and policy development for more effective rural governance and community participation in Indonesia.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Key Findings

Community engagement emerged as one of the most influential factors affecting the success of community-based rural development. When villagers are actively involved in decision-making, resource allocation, and implementation, the sustainability of development efforts increases significantly (Zeho et al., 2020; Zhan & You, 2024). However, participation levels vary widely. In regions with strong

local leadership, community involvement tends to be higher (Arintoko et al., 2020). Conversely, weak governance structures often result in limited participation, necessitating external intervention from NGOs or governmental actors.

Financial transparency also plays a pivotal role in reinforcing public trust. Studies have demonstrated that when villagers are included in budgeting and financial decisions, they are more committed to the program's success (Aisyaturrahmi et al., 2021). These findings collectively underscore the importance of strengthening both community engagement and institutional governance to maximize program outcomes.

To consolidate these insights, Table 1 presents the key success factors that support effective community-based rural development:

Table 1. Key Success Factors in the Village Independent Program

Success Factor	Description
Community Participation	Active involvement of villagers in planning and execution.
Transparent Governance	Accountable financial management and decision-making.
Strong Local Leadership	Effective leadership that mobilizes community resources.
Economic	Development of village

Diversification	enterprises such as eco-tourism and small industries.
Supporting Infrastructure	The availability of roads, electricity, and internet for economic activities.

As shown in the table, success is not defined by a single factor but by an interplay of multiple dimensions, governance, infrastructure, leadership, and economic strategy. Villages that perform well in these areas tend to demonstrate better long-term sustainability and autonomy. This directly connects to the broader question of how the development model operates in practice, which is elaborated in the next section.

Effectiveness of the Development Model

The implementation of the community-based model in VIP has demonstrated both strengths and limitations.

Strengths include the diversification of rural economies through eco-tourism and agriculture-based industries, improved governance through empowered village councils, and better infrastructure facilitated by central government funding (Sudheer, 2021). These factors have collectively supported the emergence of more self-reliant and adaptive village communities.

However, these gains are uneven. *Weaknesses* include unequal resource distribution among villages and the absence

of a cohesive national framework to ensure continuity and accountability. As noted by Henderson & Loreau (2021), short-term economic successes are not always accompanied by mechanisms for sustained development.

This dichotomy leads us to a discussion of the practical barriers that impede program implementation.

Challenges and Barriers

Despite its promising structure, the Village Independent Program continues to face considerable obstacles. These challenges stem from a mix of social, political, and infrastructural limitations:

- *Socioeconomic Barriers:* Low literacy and limited entrepreneurial skills inhibit effective fund utilization and business development (Permatasari et al., 2021).
- *Political Barriers:* Frequent leadership changes lead to inconsistent policy application, while corruption and financial mismanagement erode trust (Ćurčić et al., 2021).
- *Infrastructural Barriers:* Many villages lack the digital infrastructure necessary to engage in smart governance or digital economy models (Han & Gao, 2019; Muhtar et al., 2023).

These critical issues are summarized in the following table:

Table 2. Challenges in Implementing the Village Independent Program

Challenge	Description
Resource Disparities	Unequal allocation of funds and infrastructure.
Limited Skills	Lack of financial and entrepreneurial literacy in some villages.
Policy Inconsistencies	Leadership changes leading to inconsistent policies.
Corruption and Fund Mismanagement	Non-transparent financial management erodes community trust.
Digital Infrastructure Limitations	Lack of internet access hinders digital transformation.

The presence of these challenges highlights the need for comprehensive interventions at both the local and national levels. Addressing governance inefficiencies, improving financial oversight, and expanding digital infrastructure are key steps toward ensuring the long-term success of the Village Independent Program. Without such interventions, rural communities may struggle to achieve self-sufficiency and economic resilience.

Best Practices and Lessons Learned

While challenges are prevalent, several VIP implementations provide valuable lessons and replicable practices.

- *Integrated Community Training:* Villages that offer regular training in financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and governance are more likely to sustain improvements (John et al., 2024).
- *Technology-Driven Participation:* The integration of geospatial tools and digital platforms enhances local planning and governance transparency (Muhtar et al., 2023).
- *Public-Private Partnerships (PPP):* Collaborations with private entities and NGOs have enabled villages to access additional resources, expertise, and long-term project support.

These best practices provide a clear roadmap for improving both the impact and scalability of the program.

To further ensure policy relevance and practical implementation, the next section discusses concrete recommendations for stakeholders in government and civil society.

Discussion and Interpretation

The findings from the Village Independent Program (VIP) confirm earlier research on the critical role of *social capital* and *participatory governance* in rural transformation (Daykin et al., 2021). However, this study adds depth by revealing two underexplored dimensions:

- The scalability of community-based

initiatives

- The uneven distribution of resources between villages

These two aspects highlight the structural limitations of VIP. While some villages successfully transition to diversified, self-sufficient economies, others remain stuck in cycles of dependency due to poor infrastructure, inconsistent leadership, or weak accountability mechanisms.

In contrast to previous studies that mainly emphasized VIP's *economic benefits*, this research also foregrounds governance risks, especially corruption and fund mismanagement. These governance gaps reduce community trust and can stall even the most well-designed interventions.

Another noteworthy insight is the *unclear causal direction* between variables such as *community engagement* and *economic diversification*. While both are clearly correlated, the data does not definitively show which drives the other. Future research should apply longitudinal or quasi-experimental methods to better understand this dynamic.

These insights lead directly into the practical realm: what must policymakers do differently to ensure that the Village Independent Program achieves its intended goals?

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study highlight several critical implications for

policymakers, development practitioners, and local government stakeholders seeking to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the Village Independent Program (VIP). These implications are closely tied to the interplay between community engagement, institutional governance, digital infrastructure, and local economic diversification.

First, the study underscores the urgent need to institutionalize financial transparency and participatory governance mechanisms at the village level. As Aisyaturrahmi et al. (2021) argue, transparent financial management not only reduces corruption but also enhances community trust and willingness to participate. Therefore, introducing mandatory public budget disclosure and participatory development planning forums should be integrated into village regulations and aligned with national oversight mechanisms (Putri et al., 2024).

Second, addressing the digital divide is essential for inclusive rural development. Many underperforming VIP villages suffer from poor internet connectivity, limited access to digital tools, and low digital literacy, all of which hinder their ability to benefit from digital governance and market integration (Muhtar et al., 2023). Expanding broadband access and implementing community-based digital training, especially targeting youth, can enhance both

governance and entrepreneurship capacities (Han & Gao, 2019).

Third, the findings reinforce the strategic value of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in enhancing rural service delivery and program scalability. Villages that collaborate with NGOs and the private sector often experience higher development outcomes due to better access to technical expertise, co-financing opportunities, and innovation (de Luca et al., 2021; Tantoh et al., 2021). Formalizing these partnerships through regulatory incentives and transparent partnership guidelines is recommended to scale successful models.

In addition, youth empowerment policies must become central to VIP's future roadmap. As noted by Ćurčić et al. (2021), youth migration poses a threat to long-term sustainability in rural areas. VIP can counter this trend by integrating youth-focused entrepreneurship programs, vocational training, and leadership mentoring into its core design. Engaging youth also promotes innovation and generational continuity in village governance.

Moreover, policy interventions must be differentiated based on village typology and capacity levels. A uniform, top-down approach fails to account for the diverse socioeconomic and institutional contexts of rural communities. Villages with mature governance structures may benefit from support in product development and digital

marketing, while others require foundational capacity-building and infrastructure support (Wikantiyoso et al., 2021; Bich et al., 2021).

These practical implications are synthesized in the following table:

Table 3: Policy Recommendations for Enhancing the Village Independent Program

Recommendation	Objective
Strengthening Financial Literacy	Empower villagers with the skills to manage budgets and evaluate programs.
Expanding Digital Infrastructure	Enable access to online markets, smart governance, and e-participation.
Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)	Facilitate investment, innovation, and project co-financing.
Improving Fund Oversight	Reduce risks of mismanagement and corruption; build trust.
Youth Engagement Programs	Reduce rural exodus and build a future-ready rural workforce.
Customized Village Typology Policy	Adapt interventions based on development stage and local capacity.
Institutionalizing Participation	Embed participatory planning in village

laws and regulations.

Taken together, these policy directions offer a pathway toward a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable model of rural development, one that is both community-empowered and systemically supported.

The next logical step is to consider how these recommendations can be operationalized through collaboration across levels of government, academia, and civil society. Moreover, consistent monitoring and evaluation frameworks should be introduced to assess the medium- and long-term impact of these policy shifts.

Potential Areas for Improvement

While the current study provides important insights into the implementation and challenges of the Village Independent Program (VIP), it also reveals several knowledge gaps that merit further scholarly investigation. Advancing the field of community-based rural development requires deeper, more context-sensitive, and longitudinal research to support evidence-based policymaking.

Longitudinal Impact Studies

One of the most pressing research needs is to assess the long-term outcomes of VIP beyond the immediate improvements in infrastructure and economic indicators. While many studies, including this one, highlight early successes in terms of financial inclusion, cooperative development, and digital engagement, there

is insufficient understanding of whether these outcomes are sustainable over time. Longitudinal studies should focus on metrics such as youth retention, intergenerational leadership, and changes in social capital.

These studies would benefit from time-series data collected over 5–10 years to assess whether initial gains translate into lasting village autonomy (Rut et al., 2022; Suriyankietkaew et al., 2022).

Causal Mechanisms and Directionality

Another critical research direction involves unpacking the causal relationship between community engagement and economic diversification. Although the present study finds strong correlation between participatory governance and successful development outcomes, it remains unclear whether engagement leads to diversification or if diversified economies create conditions that stimulate higher community involvement. Future research employing quasi-experimental designs, such as difference-in-differences (DiD) models or propensity score matching, would help clarify these mechanisms and provide guidance for scaling interventions (Zhan & You, 2024).

Readiness for Digital Transformation

As digital infrastructure becomes an increasingly important enabler of rural development, further investigation is needed into digital transformation readiness in VIP villages. While the present study identifies

poor internet connectivity as a barrier, it does not delve into how digital skills, trust in technology, and institutional capacity influence the adoption of e-governance and smart village systems. Comparative studies between digitally connected and disconnected villages could provide valuable insights into the preconditions for successful digital inclusion (Muhtar et al., 2023; Han & Gao, 2019).

Resilience to External Shocks

The vulnerability of rural communities to external shocks, such as pandemics, climate-related disasters, or political instability, has been underscored by recent global events. Yet, little is known about how VIP frameworks perform under such conditions. Future research should explore resilience-building mechanisms within community-based development models, assessing which structural or social factors enable some villages to recover and adapt faster than others. Case studies from regions affected by COVID-19, floods, or droughts could provide critical lessons for improving VIP's adaptive capacity (Ćurčić et al., 2021; Teshome et al., 2021).

Gender and Social Inclusion Dimensions

Another understudied area is the role of gender, disability, and minority inclusion in participatory village governance. While community participation is a core tenet of VIP, the composition of decision-making forums and leadership structures is rarely

examined from an intersectional lens. Research into how women, youth, and marginalized groups engage (or are excluded) from planning and budgetary processes could yield recommendations for more equitable governance models (Agustang & Upe, 2021; Daykin et al., 2021).

Strengthening the Argument

The discussion highlighted that active community engagement leads to better governance and economic outcomes. Villages with strong local leadership and transparent budget management experience higher public trust and sustained participation. Additionally, cooperative-based businesses and technology integration have emerged as effective strategies for ensuring long-term economic resilience.

Comparative analysis with previous research suggests that while VIP has successfully improved infrastructure and local governance, more work is needed to address regional disparities and long-term sustainability. Future policies must focus on enhancing village-level financial accountability, improving internet connectivity, and fostering youth participation in rural development initiatives.

To clarify the interconnected nature of the Village Independent Program's implementation dynamics, a conceptual framework is developed to illustrate how various success factors, challenges, and

policy interventions interact. As shown in the figure below, the program's sustainability is shaped not by isolated elements, but by a systemic chain of enabling conditions and constraints.

At the top of the framework, community engagement initiates the process by fostering participatory governance. This strengthens local governance capacity, which in turn supports economic diversification, through village enterprises, tourism, and cooperatives. These three elements form a sequential pathway that culminates in program success.

However, this pathway is often disrupted by contextual barriers, including limited infrastructure, political turnover, and lack of entrepreneurial skills. These barriers can weaken community trust and reduce implementation quality. On the other end, policy interventions are placed strategically to respond to program outcomes, addressing barriers and reinforcing successful practices.



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Key Success Factors, Barriers, and Policy Interventions in the Village Independent

Program

Source: Adapted by author based on Castro-Arce & Vanclay (2020); Fouladvand et al. (2022); Celata & Sanna (2019).

This conceptual model not only clarifies the causal direction, where *community engagement drives diversification through governance*, but also emphasizes the need for integrated policy responses. Rather than treating community participation, economic growth, and sustainability as separate goals, the model shows that each must be aligned within a cohesive development system.

The framework serves as a practical tool for policymakers, enabling them to design targeted strategies that simultaneously empower communities, build local institutions, and overcome systemic challenges. It also supports the article's theoretical contribution by linking grassroots participation with structural development outcomes in rural governance.

Recommendations

To ensure the Village Independent Program (VIP) delivers long-term and inclusive rural development outcomes, several interrelated strategies must be implemented. Strengthening village governance remains essential. Transparent financial management and participatory planning processes should become standard practices. Establishing mentorship models where successful villages assist others can

also improve capacity across regions.

In parallel, improving digital and economic infrastructure is crucial. Reliable internet access enables villages to engage in digital entrepreneurship and smart governance. This must be supported by microfinance and cooperative development to boost local economic resilience, especially in remote areas with limited access to formal financial services.

Sustainability should be embedded within all VIP initiatives. Environmentally conscious land use and renewable energy solutions can help protect local ecosystems while supporting livelihoods. At the same time, partnerships with NGOs and private companies can bring innovation, funding, and technical support into village development efforts.

Youth participation is equally important. Many rural areas face youth outmigration due to a lack of opportunities. VIP should invest in entrepreneurship training, digital skills, and inclusive leadership roles for young people. Creating regional learning networks between villages can also foster knowledge exchange and innovation.

Overall, the Village Independent Program has the potential to become a replicable model for rural transformation. However, its success depends on well-integrated policies that prioritize good governance, digital inclusion, sustainability,

and intergenerational engagement. With the right support, VIP can evolve into a scalable solution not only for Indonesia but for other rural regions facing similar development challenges.

REFERENCES

- Agustang, A., & Upe, A. (2021). Community empowerment strategy towards a sustainable rural community-based tourism village. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354718108>
- Aisyaturrahmi, A., Nuswantara, D., Prastiwi, D., Bhilawa, L., & Md Daud, S. A. M. (2021). Transparency and accountability of a village fund management during COVID-19 crisis. *International Journal of Service Management and Sustainability*, 6(2), 189. <https://doi.org/10.24191/ijsms.v6i2.15580>
- Arintoko, A., Ahmad, A. A., Gunawan, D. S., & Supadi, S. (2020). Community-based tourism village development strategies: A case of Borobudur tourism village area, Indonesia. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 29(2), 398. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.2>
- Bich, P., Nguyen, H.-T., Tran, V. T., Trang, T., & Hoang, N. (2021). Current path to community-based sustainable tourism development of Khanh Hoa Province in Vietnam. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology*, 18, 508–525. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353259975>
- Castro-Arce, K., & Vanclay, F. (2020). Transformative social innovation for sustainable rural development: An analytical framework to assist community-based initiatives. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 74, 45–54. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2019.11.010>
- Celata, F., & Sanna, V. S. (2019). A multi-dimensional assessment of the environmental and socioeconomic performance of community-based sustainability initiatives in Europe. *Regional Environmental Change*, 19(4), 939–952. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10113-019-01493-9>
- Ćurčić, N., Mirković Svitlica, A., Brankov, J., Bjeljac, Ž., Pavlović, S., & Jandžiković, B. (2021). The role of rural tourism in strengthening the sustainability of rural areas: The case of Zlakusa Village. *Sustainability*, 13(12), 6747. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13126747>
- Daykin, N., Mansfield, L., Meads, C., Gray, K., Golding, A., Tomlinson, A., & Victor, C. (2021). The role of social capital in participatory arts for wellbeing: Findings from a qualitative systematic review. *Arts & Health*, 13(2), 134–157. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17533015.2020.1802605>
- de Luca, C., López-Murcia, J., Conticelli, E., Santangelo, A., Perello, M., & Tondelli, S. (2021). Participatory process for regenerating rural areas through heritage-led plans: The RURITAGE community-based methodology. *Sustainability*, 13(9), 5212. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13095212>
- Dolezal, C., & Novelli, M. (2022). Power in community-based tourism: Empowerment and partnership in Bali. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 30(10), 2352–2370.

- <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1838527>
- Fouladvand, J., Ghorbani, A., Mouter, N., & Herder, P. (2022). Analysing community-based initiatives for heating and cooling: A systematic and critical review. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 88, 102507. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2022.102507>
- Han, H., & Gao, Q. (2019). Community-based welfare targeting and political elite capture: Evidence from rural China. *World Development*, 115, 145–159. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.11.010>
- Henderson, K., & Loreau, M. (2021). Unequal access to resources undermines global sustainability. *Science of The Total Environment*, 763, 142981. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.142981>
- John, R., Habib, I., Afif, D., & Niane, A. (2024). Training and capacity building: An essential strategy for development at an international research center. *Sustainable Agriculture Research*, 1(2), 57. <https://doi.org/10.5539/sar.v1n2p57>
- Juma, L. O., & Khademi-Vidra, A. (2019). Community-based tourism and sustainable development of rural regions in Kenya; Perceptions of the citizenry. *Sustainability*, 11(17), 4733. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11174733>
- Lubis, H., Rohmatillah, N., & Rahmatina, D. (2020). Strategy of tourism village development based on local wisdom. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora*, 9, 320. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jish-undiksha.v9i2.22385>
- Muhtar, E. A., Abdillah, A., Widianingsih, I., & Adikancana, Q. M. (2023). Smart villages, rural development and community vulnerability in Indonesia: A bibliometric analysis. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2219118>
- Naku, D. (2020). Theoretical perspectives on the determinants of effective community participation in development programs. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345308767>
- Pawson, S., D'Arcy, P., & Richardson, S. (2016). The value of community-based tourism in Banteay Chhmar, Cambodia. *Tourism Geographies*, 19(3), 378–397. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2016.1183143>
- Permatasari, P., Ilman, A. S., Tilt, C., Lestari, D., Islam, S., Tenrini, R., Rahman, A., Samosir, P., & Wardhana, I. (2021). The village fund program in Indonesia: Measuring the effectiveness and alignment to sustainable development goals. *Sustainability*, 13, 12294. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132112294>
- Putri, C. M., Argilés-Bosch, J. M., & Ravenda, D. (2024). Creating good village governance: An effort to prevent village corruption in Indonesia. *Journal of Financial Crime*, 31(2), 455–468. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFC-11-2022-0266>
- Rut, P., Kurniatin, E., & Maksum, I. R. (2022). Sustainable strategy for community-based drinking water supply (PAMSIMAS) post program in rural Indonesia. *Journal of Governance and Public Policy*, 9(3). <https://doi.org/10.18196/jgpp.v9i3.14629>
- Sudheer, A. (2021). Integrated village tourism for rural sustainability and development: A review of village tourism and its impact on the environment and society of Kumbalangi

- model tourism village. *Journal of Tourism*, 7, 256–266. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/352357390>
- Suriyankietkaew, S., Krittayaruangroj, K., & Iamsawan, N. (2022). Sustainable leadership practices and competencies of SMEs for sustainability and resilience: A community-based social enterprise study. *Sustainability*, 14(10), 5762. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14105762>
- Tantoh, H. B., Simatele, D. M., Ebhuoma, E., Donkor, K., & McKay, T. J. M. (2021). Towards a pro-community-based water resource management system in Northwest Cameroon: Practical evidence and lessons of best practices. *GeoJournal*, 86(2), 943–961. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-019-10085-3>
- Teshome, E., Shita, F., & Abebe, F. (2021). Current community-based ecotourism practices in Menz Guassa community conservation area, Ethiopia. *GeoJournal*, 86. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-020-10179-3>
- van Haren, N., Fleiner, R., Liniger, H., & Harari, N. (2019). Contribution of community-based initiatives to the sustainable development goal of land degradation neutrality. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 94, 211–219. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2018.12.017>
- Wang, D., Chen, C., & Findlay, C. (2023). A review of rural transformation studies: Definition, measurement, and indicators. *Journal of Integrative Agriculture*, 22(12), 3568–3581. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jia.2023.10.038>
- Watini, S., Nurhaeni, T., & Meria, L. (2021). Development of village office service models to community based on mobile computing. *International Journal of Cyber and IT Service Management*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.34306/ijcitsm.v1i2.51>
- Wikantiyoso, R., Diyah, S., Cahyaningsih, D. S., Sulaksono, A., Widayati, S., Poerwoningsih, D., & Triyosoputri, E. (2021). Development of sustainable community-based tourism in Kampong Grangsil, Jambangan Village, Dampit District, Malang Regency. *International Review for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development*, 9, 64–77. https://doi.org/10.14246/irspsd.9.1_64
- Zeho, F., Prabowo, A., Estiningtyas, R., Mahadiansar, M., & Sentanu, I. G. E. P. S. (2020). Stakeholder collaboration to support accountability in village fund management and rural development. *Journal of Governance and Public Policy*, 3, 89–100. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346579089>
- Zhan, W., & You, Z. (2024). Factors influencing villagers' willingness to participate in grassroots governance: Evidence from the Chinese social survey. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03574-5>