

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF *DESA MANDIRI CINTA PETANI*
(*SARI TANI*)PROGRAM IN *TIMOR TENGAH UTARA*(TTU)
DISTRICT, INDONESIA

Salesius Vitalis Kolne¹,

Fidelis Atanus¹,

Yoh Kenedy Bere²

Abstract

This study aimed to explore the implementation mechanism of *Desa Mandiri Cinta Petani* (Sari Tani) Program and identify hindering factors for the implementation of the program in *Timor Tengah Utara* (TTU) District, Indonesia. One-on-one in-depth interviews were carried out to collect data from the participants recruited using purposive sampling technique. Data analysis was guided by a qualitative data analysis framework. The results indicated that program mechanism was not well socialise dat the beginning of the program implementation as many of the program beneficiaries did not fully understand their duties. Hindering factors for program implementation included inability of program beneficiaries to return the funds lent to them to support their business due to several reasons including crop failure, expenses for children tuition fees and daily needs, lack of trust in program implementers at village level, underperformance of program implementers and the lack of incentives for program implementers. Inability of program implementers who were also program beneficiaries to return the funds was also reported to be a factor supportive of the unwillingness of other program beneficiaries to return the money lent to them. The study indicates the need for well-informed program implementers and the intensive delivery of program information socialisation to program beneficiaries prior to program implementation.

Key words: Implementation, *Sari Tani* program, TTU district, Indonesia

¹Faculty of Social Science and Political Science, Timor University, Kefamenanu, Timor, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

² Kementerian Sosial Republik Indonesia, Jl. Salemba Raya, No. 28, Jakarta Pusat, Indonesia, 10430.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the countries where poverty remains a major problem [1]. Unavailability of basic needs and the difficulty of access to jobs are the reflection of poverty condition in many places in Indonesia. Therefore, term poverty is mainly defined as a situation where there is an inability to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, housing, education and health [1, 2]. It may also mean not being able to achieve the standard level of living needs or low income or economic level [3]. The poverty rate in Indonesia is very high where 27.77 million Indonesian population are categorized as poor people [4]. In East Nusa Tenggara province, the percentage of poverty is also very high at 22.01%, and this greatly impedes regional and national development [5].

North Central Timor (TTU) is one of the districts in the province of East Nusa Tenggara that still has a high poverty rate. Data show that the percentage of poverty in the district is 35% [4]. The poverty spreads in 24 sub-districts and 194 villages. Among the rural poor, there are 24 types of people with social welfare problems (PMKS). In addition, people also often lack capital to support their business and meet basic needs such as education, health, and economy. Therefore, the TTU district government seeks to help communities in the district by providing business capital. The business capital is intended to support their economic activities such as livestock raising.

One of the programs created by the TTU district government to help communities is the *Desa Mandiri Cinta Petani* Program (*Sari Tani* Program). The program provides funds of three hundred million rupiahs for communities in each village to help business activities of the villagers. The funds are a grant from the district government to the village communities as a capital accumulation to establish a Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDES). Therefore, *Sari Tani* funds have been accommodated in the Village Budget (APB-Des) in each village in TTU districts since 2015. The program is a form of budget assistance of three hundred million rupiahs per village, with the following details: two hundred fifty million rupiahs are allocated for Productive Economic Business (revolving), forty million rupiahs are allocated for the training costs of the village government and *Sari Tani* organising unit (UPST) management for 3 years, and ten million rupiahs are allocated for the operational costs of the UPST management. The

funds are provided by the local government of TTU district with the aim to increase community income and reduce the gap in income per capita of the community.

However, the implementation of the program seems to be not running well especially in relation to the return of *Sari Tani* funds by the program beneficiaries to the government. Therefore, this study aimed to explore *Sari Tani* program mechanism and identify hindering factors for implementation of the program at the village level in TTU district, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.

METHODS

Study design

A qualitative inquiry using one-to-one in-depth interviews was employed in this research. This qualitative design helped the research to observe the real experiences, situations, and settings where the respondents lived, worked and interacted, and provided a chance for direct interaction between the researcher and the participants [6-8].

Data collection and data analysis

Data collection was conducted in 2017 involving 20 respondents recruited using purposive sampling technique. Prior to the interviews, participants were advised about the nature and aim of the study. Interviews focused on exploring program mechanism and identify hindering factors for the implementation of the program at village level in TTU district. Prior to the interviews, participants were informed about voluntary principle of their participation in this study. Participants were also told that each interview would take 45 to 60 minutes and be recorded using a tape recorder. They were also assured that information they provided in the interview would be confidential and anonymous.

The recorded data were transcribed verbatim and translated into English for further analysis. Five steps of qualitative data analysis introduced by Ritchie and Spencer [9] were used to guide this thematic analysis. They included familiarisation with the data by reading them line by line and making comments, identification of emerging themes, indexing to the entire data, charting the data, and mapping and interpretation of the data [9, 10]. The framework analysis is a valid data

process and provides a systematic approach to data management, and enhances rigour, transparency, consistency and structure of the data [9].

RESULTS

Program Implementation Mechanism

Findings from the field work indicated that the implementation of *Sari Tani* program was based on the stipulated guidelines of the program. The funds to support people in need within communities came from the local government and were distributed based on a specific mechanism. Firstly, the funds were transferred by the TTU district government to the bank account of UPST as the implementer and the UPST distributed the funds to the program beneficiaries. The beneficiaries were also required to submit a proposal indicating the amount they needed to support their economic activities or businesses.

“Yes, there is program implementation mechanism. During the implementation process, the UPST and PKM [community work program] collaborate based on the guidelines of *Sari Tani* program. *Sari Tani* funds are firstly transferred by the government to the bank account of UPST and then UPST distributes the funds to each farmer group and the amount is based on the proposal proposed by each group” (Participant 1, a program implementer).

“The funds come to us through the program implementer called UPST. The funds are from the government budget to assist us but UPST is the one that takes care of the money and distributes it to each farmer group in need to support their business. So, it is not directly transferred to our account” (Participant 20, a program beneficiary).

Socialisation of the program information and identification of potential program beneficiaries were also conducted by program implementers at sub-district and village level. Several study participants indicated that there were a few activities undertaken by the implementers prior to program implementation including socialisation of the programs for each farmer group to ensure that they understood the program mechanism and purpose. Likewise, identification of potential participants to avoid double funds for more than one beneficiary from the same family:

“So, we socialised the program for the beneficiaries in each group and identified all the potential beneficiaries in each group. This was to make sure that they understood all the guidelines and mechanisms, and to avoid more than one beneficiary from the same family. We should have also taken action to assess the livestock the beneficiaries bought to make sure that the livestock fulfilled the standard criteria, but I think we have often failed to do that” (Participant 1, a program implementer).

However, it seemed that program socialisation to the beneficiaries was not conducted as planned and many of the program beneficiaries did not understand all the mechanisms and guidelines of the program. A number of program beneficiaries interviewed expressed that they did not get much information as the staffs from both PKM and UPST did not socialise required information related to the program and were out of contact during the program implementation:

“We organised our group and distributed *Sari Tani* funds among us. The PKM team met us once to introduce a few things but disappeared afterwards, we called and texted them but got no response from them” (Participant 13, a program beneficiary).

“The PKM for our village was just replaced by someone else because of underperformance” (Participant 19, a program beneficiary).

“We do not know the PKM because nobody comes to our village” (Participant 15, a program beneficiary).

Hindering factors for program implementation

Inability of the program beneficiaries to return the funds

The implementation of *Sari Tani* program seemed to not go as planned due to the inability of the program beneficiaries to return the amount of money lent to them by the government. Several interviewees commented that many people in each farmer group were unable to return the money they had received from the government. This was mainly due to the fact that they bought under-standard livestock with lower price and used the rest of the money for other needs. This had led to lower price sale of the livestock after raising them a year:

“The implementation of *Sari Tani* program in our village seems to go well, some of the program beneficiaries have returned the money they borrowed but some have not. We have asked them repeatedly but there are program beneficiaries who think that the money is for them and not meant to be returned to the government” (Participant 8, a program implementer).

The implementation of the program is based on the program guidelines, but the problem is that the beneficiaries are the ones who use the money and most of them bought under-standard livestock with lower prices and the rest of the money was used for other purposes. So, after one year raising the livestock, the livestock were sold with lower prices which made them unable to return the money lent to them (Participants 2, program implementer)

“The problem is that people do not carefully assess whether or not the livestock they would like to buy fulfil the criteria. This has often led to inability to return the amount they have received from the government. For example, the amount each of them received is five million rupiahs and they use only half of this to buy livestock and in the following year they might be able to sell it with four million rupiahs. That means the price is less than the amount they have borrowed (Participant 4, a program implementer).

Inability of some of the program beneficiaries to return the amount of money lent to them to support their activities or business seemed to be supported by several reasons. Several participants interviewed revealed that the experience of crop failure in the previous year was one of the reasons that hampered them from returning the government funds. Another supporting factor reported to make them unable to return the money lent to them was that they had to allocate some amount of money for the tuition fees of their children:

“Half of the program beneficiaries have been able to return the amount they borrowed but the rest cannot. We understand that many in our village experienced crop failure last year. That makes it difficult for them to return the money as they have no other sources of income. This is the situation going on here” (Participant 6, a program implementer).

“We haven’t returned the money because we do not have money, and last year we failed to harvest due to long drought. So, we just don’t know where to earn extra income to pay back the government” (Participant 9, a program beneficiary).

“People want to return the money but many of them said they haven’t got the money because the money they have has been used to pay the tuition fees of their kids and buy necessities. The village government has urged them to return the instalments of IDR 250,000 per month, but many cannot afford it” (Participant 7, a program implementer).

Lack of trust in program implementers

Lack of trust in the village government staff as the implementers and the fact that the village government staff who were also program beneficiaries had not yet returned the funds, were indicated to be the supporting factors for the unwillingness of the other program beneficiaries to return the funds to the government. Interviews with a few respondents revealed that program beneficiaries were aware that village government staff received the funds and had not yet return the money, and believed that the money they paid back to the government would be misused by the village government staff:

“We do not want to return the *Sari Tanifunds* unless the village government staffs have done it. They ask us repeatedly to return the money but they do not return their parts, and even the Chief of our village has not returned his part” (Participant 10, a program beneficiary).

“Yes, it is correct. We do not want to pay because the Chief of our village has not returned his part” (Participant 11, a program beneficiary).

“I think people have money and are able to return the amount of money they have borrowed but the problem is that they do not trust the implementers, the staffs of the village government. They assume that the staffs will use the money for their own personal needs. So, people want to pay but PKM should be here to receive the money” (Participant 10, a program beneficiary).

“In our village, the UPST does not collect the money from the program beneficiaries because the beneficiaries do not trust them and want to pay it directly to the PKM” (Participant 17, a program beneficiary and village chief).

Underperformance and lack of incentives for program implementers

Underperformance of program implementers seemed to be another hindering factor for the implementation of *Sari Tani* program. In other words, the performance of program implementers in implementing the program was deemed as an important factor. Interviews with the participants revealed that the performance of program implementers were not at the same level as some seemed to be more actively involved than the others:

“PKM and UPST operate at the village level and but fact is that only PKM staffs take care of this program, while UPST staffs do not. This is because the PKM staffs receive incentives and the UPST staffs do not” (Participant 12, a program beneficiary)

“Previously, UPST staffs were actively involved but not anymore active because they do not receive incentives as the PKM staffs do” (Participant 5, a program beneficiary).

“It seems that program implementers do not fully understand their roles and lack of knowledge about the program. I think that is the reason why they underperform” (Participant 10, a program beneficiary).

DISCUSSION

This study explores *Sari Tani* program mechanism and identifies hindering factors for the implementation of the program in each village in TTU district, Nusa Tenggara Timor, Indonesia. The results show that the program was implemented based on a certain mechanism that had been established as the program guideline. The mechanism referred to as found in this study includes fund transfer from the district government to the implementers and from the implementers to the program beneficiaries. The current study also suggests that program socialization to increase understanding of program beneficiaries and identification of program beneficiaries to avoid the possibility of two or more beneficiaries from the same family were also conducted prior to the program implementation. This is in line with the results of previous studies [11, 12] reporting

program introduction to program beneficiaries as an important part of program implementation as it can lead to successful implementation of next stages of a program or intervention.

The results of this study also indicate the lack of understanding of program implementers about their duties and functions, which seemed to have led to underperformance. It is an indication of the lack of human resources required to implement the program as planned and optimally. Human resources are one of the resources contained in a management system and include all people who carry out activities. In general, the resources can be grouped into two types, namely, (1) human resources, (2) non-human resources. The non-human resource group include capital, machinery, technology, materials, and others [13, 14]. Human Resources are the only resource that has reason, feeling, desire, ability, skill, knowledge, encouragement, and power. All potential human resources are very influential on the efforts of an organisation in achieving its goals. Human resources are required to operate and make use of advanced technology and information and the availability of capital and adequate material in order to achieve the objectives of an organisation [15, 16].

Findings of the current study also suggest several hindering factors for the implementation of *Sari Tani* program in TTU district. They included inability of program beneficiaries to return the funds to the government. One of the reasons was that the amount of funds transferred to each of the program beneficiaries was used to buy livestock which did not fulfil the standard criteria. This led to lower price sale after one or two years nourishing the livestock. Other reasons indicated to support the inability of the program beneficiaries to return the government funds were the experience of crop failure in the previous year and the expenses for children's tuition fees and the necessities. Lack of trust in program implementers at village level to maintain the money and the inability of program implementers who were also program beneficiaries to return the funds, were also brought up as added hindering factors. This study's findings are supportive of the previous results [17-19], indicating trust in leadership as an influential factors for the successful implementation of program activities or intervention.

This study's findings also suggest that the lack of understanding of the functions of program implementers as provided in the program guidelines and the absence of incentives for the

implementers were supportive of underperformance among the program implementers. This seemed to lead to the fact that program beneficiaries did not get much information, lacked understanding of the program mechanism and guidelines and misused the funds for other purposes. Wilson suggests that to guarantee the implementation of a program, it is necessary to deliver information to the target group prior to the implementation process [20]. The purpose of providing this information is to ensure that the target group understands the policies that will be implemented and they will not only be able to accept various programs initiated by the government but also actively participate in efforts to reach policy objectives [20, 21].

CONCLUSIONS

This study reports *Sari Tani* program implementation mechanism and several hindering factors for the program implementation process in TTU district, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Program mechanism refers to the procedures of the fund transfer which is from the district government to the implementers at village level and the final distribution by the implementers to the program beneficiaries. It also refers to the program information socialisation and identification of the potential program beneficiaries prior to the distribution of the funds to each beneficiary in each farmer group. Hindering factors for program implementation include inability of program beneficiaries to return the government funds lent to them to support their business due to several reasons including crop failure, expenses for children tuition fees and daily needs, lack of trust in program implementers at village level, underperformance of program implementers and lack of incentives for program implementers. Inability of program implementers who were also program beneficiaries to return the funds was also brought up to be another factor supporting the unwillingness of other beneficiaries to return the funds lent to them. The findings indicate the need for well-informed program implementers and the intensive delivery of program information socialisation to program beneficiaries prior to program implementation. These are to ensure that both program implementers and program beneficiaries fully understand their roles, functions and duties related to the program.

REFERENCES

1. UNDP, *Poverty in Focus*. 2006, United Nations Development Program: USA.
2. Chakravarty, S.R., K. Ravi, and M. Diganta, *Population Growth and Poverty Measurement*. Social Choice and Welfare, 2006. **26**: p. 471-483.
3. Sen, A.K., *On Economic Inequality with a substantial annexe 'after a Quarter Century*. 1997, USA: Oxford: Clarendon Oxford Press.
4. BPS Indonesia, *Angka Kemiskinan di Indonesia*. 2017, Badan Pusat Statistik: Jakarta.
5. BPS NTT, *Angka Kemiskinan di NTT*. 2017, Badan Pusat Statistik Propinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur: Kupang.
6. Creswell, J.W., *Research, Kuantitatif Design Pendekatan Kualitatif, dan Mixed*. 2009, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
7. Harrison, L., *Metodologi Penelitian Politik*. 2009, Jakarta: Kencana.
8. Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R & D*. 2014, Bandung: Alfabeta.
9. Ritchie, J. and L. Spencer, *Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research*, in *Analyzing Qualitative Data*, A. Bryman and R.G. Burgess, Editors. 1994, Routledge: London. p. 173-194.
10. Fauk, N.K., et al., *Understanding the strategies employed to cope with increased numbers of AIDS orphaned children in families in rural settings: a case of Mbeya Rural District, Tanzania*. Infectious Diseases of Poverty, 2017. **6**(21): p. 1-10.
11. Sumaryadi, I.N., *Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah Otonom dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*. 2005, Jakarta: Citra Utama.
12. Bryant, C. and White, *Manajemen Pembangunan untuk Negara Berkembang*. 1987, Jakarta: LP3ES.
13. Javed, A., et al., *Flexible Human Resource Management And Firm Innovativeness: The Mediating Role Of Innovative Work Behavior*. Journal of Human Resource Management, 2017. **20**(1): p. 1-10.
14. Randy, R. and R. Nugroho, *Manajemen Pemberdayaan :Sebuah Pengantar dan Panduan untuk Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*. 2007, Jakarta: Elex Media Komputindo.
15. Vermeeren, B., et al., *HRM and its effect on employee, organizational and financial outcomes in health care organizations*. Human Resources for Health, 2014. **12**(35): p. 1-11.

16. Maru, Y.T. and K. Woodfort, *Encanging Emancipatory System Metodologies Within A Pluralistic Critical System Frame workn For Sustainable Development*. 2006.
17. Burchell, M. and J. Robin, *The great workplace*. 2011, New York: The Great Workplace Institute.
18. Hurley, R.F., *Decision to trust*. Harvard Business Review, 2006(online): p. 11.
19. Mineo, D.L., *The Importance of Trust in Leadership*. Research Management Review, 2014. **20**(1): p. 1-7.
20. Wilson, T., *The Empowerment Mannual*. 1996, London: Grower Publishing Company.
21. Maru, Y.T. and K. Woodfort, *Encanging Emancipatory System Metodologies Within A Pluralistic Critical System Frame workn For Sustainable Development*. 2006.