



Original Article

Implementation of the Independent Village Program to Improve the Economy of Muara Madras Village Community, Jangkat Subdistrict, Merangin Regency

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Abstract:

The Independent Village Program is a local development policy that aims to enhance rural communities' economic resilience through institutional strengthening, local potential utilization, and community empowerment. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the program in Muara Madras Village, Jangkat Subdistrict, Merangin Regency. A qualitative descriptive method was used, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings reveal that the program has had a positive impact on improving community welfare through agriculture, aquaculture, and entrepreneurship training. However, challenges such as weak marketing systems and limited youth involvement remain. The program is considered effective but requires strategic improvements for sustainability.

Keywords: Independent Village, community empowerment, rural economy, policy implementation.

Introduction

Villages in Indonesia serve as the fundamental unit in the national development framework. The government's Independent Village Program (Program Desa Mandiri) is an effort to encourage village-based autonomy by focusing on community empowerment and sustainable economic development (Eko, 2014). This program is based on the principles of local potential development and the optimization of village institutions, such as Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), farmer groups, and women's economic groups.

Muara Madras Village was designated as a beneficiary of this program starting in 2020, with various initiatives such as aquaculture training, cassava processing, and assistance in marketing local products. However, based on preliminary findings, the impact of the program appears uneven. Some community members have succeeded in increasing their income, while others struggle with sustainability due to infrastructure



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and human resource limitations. This study aims to explore how the program is implemented, the enabling and inhibiting factors, and the extent of its economic impact on local residents.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the implementation of the Independent Village Program in Muara Madras Village. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with village officials, program beneficiaries, and facilitators; observations during program activities; and review of official village documents. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, particularly those directly involved in program execution.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by [Miles and Huberman \(1994\)](#), which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To ensure data validity, triangulation of sources and techniques was conducted ([Miles & Huberman, 1994](#)).

Results

Implementation Overview

The Independent Village Program (Program Desa Mandiri) in Muara Madras Village, Jangkat Subdistrict, Merangin Regency, is aimed at increasing local economic capacity through empowerment, infrastructure improvement, and the utilization of village potential. Based on interviews and field observations, this program has been actively implemented through several key efforts:

- 1 Empowerment Activities: Training programs in agriculture, livestock, and entrepreneurship have been provided to improve villagers' skills and income-generating capacity. The table is made with no vertical lines (column lines) as the format and examples be low)
- 2 Infrastructure Development: Road access has improved, supporting transportation of agricultural products and access to markets.
- 3 Local Resource Utilization: Agriculture remains the main livelihood, with key commodities such as rice, coffee, and vegetables supported through improved tools and methods.

The village government has played an important role in facilitating these initiatives and encouraging community involvement.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Supporting Factors:

- 1 Abundant natural resources: Fertile land and access to water sources support farming and plantation activities.
- 2 Strong leadership and support: The village head and apparatus actively promote and implement program activities.
- 3 Community motivation: There is a willingness among the villagers to improve their economy through self-initiated efforts.
- 4 External support: Assistance from local government and institutions in the form of funding, training, and guidance.

Inhibiting Factors:

1. Lack of understanding: Not all residents fully understand the concept and

goals of the program.

2. Low participation: Many villagers are unable to attend training or forums due to time constraints.
3. Limited human resources: Some village officials lack technical skills to support implementation.
4. Unequal access: Certain areas still lack sufficient infrastructure such as clean water, internet, and health services.

Community Participation and Economic Impact

Participation has become a key element in the program's success. Community involvement is evident in several ways:

1. Joint development of BUMDes (Village-Owned Enterprises)
2. Musyawarah Desa (Village deliberation forums)
3. Voluntary labor in building infrastructure

Economic improvements have been seen in:

1. Increased crop yields
2. More diversified income sources
3. Growth of small businesses (MSMEs) such as local snack production, handicrafts, and eco-tourism services

However, challenges remain. Not all members of the community benefit equally from the program. Elderly residents, women without access to capital, and isolated households are often left behind. This calls for more inclusive strategies and targeted assistance.

Strategic Focus Areas of the Program

Based on field findings, the strategic focus areas that have shown progress include:

1. Agricultural Sector
 - a. Promotion of organic farming and improved irrigation systems
 - b. Post-harvest processing and packaging training
 - c. Marketing assistance to expand product reach beyond the village
2. Microenterprise and MSME Support
 - a. Business training and digital marketing education
 - b. Provision of equipment and seed capital
 - c. Partnerships with external cooperatives and banks
3. Infrastructure and Basic Services
 - a. Paving village roads, constructing bridges, and improving transportation
 - b. Establishing public facilities (clean water sources, schools, and clinics)
4. Tourism Development
 - a. Development of attractions such as rafting on local rivers, hot springs, and forest tours

- b. Capacity building of local tour guides
- c. Eco-tourism promotion via social media

These initiatives collectively support the village's transformation toward economic independence and sustainability.

Summary of Achievements and Challenges

Achievements:

1. The village received the Anugerah Desa Mandiri award in 2023
2. Increase in the Village Development Index (IDM)
3. Strengthened collaboration between village government and community

Challenges:

1. Need for better program socialization and education
2. Gaps in resource distribution and follow-up monitoring
3. Dependence on government aid in some areas

Overall, the implementation of the Independent Village Program in Muara Madras has made considerable contributions to economic improvement. However, sustainability requires consistent involvement, evaluation, and enhancement of local capacity. Stakeholder collaboration and community engagement remain key to future success.

Conclusion

The implementation of the Independent Village Program in Muara Madras Village has generally achieved its objectives in improving community economic welfare, especially through the utilization of local resources and community-based institutions. Active participation of women's groups and the commitment of village leaders have contributed to the success of several pilot initiatives. Nevertheless, the program's long-term impact remains at risk due to weak monitoring systems, limited market access, and low youth involvement.

Suggestion

1. Establish a village marketing unit that helps distribute local products to broader markets.
2. Conduct entrepreneurship workshops tailored to the interests of local youth to increase their participation.
3. Strengthen monitoring and evaluation frameworks to ensure the sustainability of village business groups.
4. Build partnerships with universities and the private sector to improve capacity building, funding, and access to technology.

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