

Citizen Forum on Participatory Planning and Budgeting to Promote the Inclusive Village Governance

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Abstrak : Pasca 23 tahun reformasi, salah satu produk regulatif yang merefleksikan devolusi dan pendelegasian kewenangan pengelolaan pembangunan secara desentralistik kepada pemerintah tingkat lokal adalah Undang-Undang Desa No. 6 Tahun 2014 yang menjanjikan keterlibatan masyarakat lebih jauh lagi, dengan menempatkan desa sebagai pusat pembangunan daerah dan bukan hanya sebagai obyek program nasional. Kegiatan fasilitasi forum warga ini diselenggarakan dalam rangka perluasan pemahaman tentang substansi perencanaan-penganggaran partisipatif dan signifikasi keterlibatan masyarakat dalam pengelolaan pembangunan desa, yang telah dilaksanakan selama Agustus 2021 lalu di Desa Bajo, Kecamatan Soromandi, Kabupaten Bima, Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat dengan melibatkan puluhan warga, terutama kelompok perempuan, sebagai peserta. Metode utama yang diterapkan selama fasilitasi ini untuk membahas segala sesuatu yang bersinggungan dengan prospek, kendala, serta kebutuhan substantif program adalah berupa ceramah, brainstorming, praktek, dan pendampingan. Kelompok perempuan yang menjadi peserta rata-rata menegaskan bahwa mereka bukanlah sosok warga yang pernah terlibat dan/atau melibatkan diri dalam forum perencanaan-penganggaran yang selama ini diselenggarakan di desanya. Mereka sama sekali belum pernah merasakan atmosfer forum kewargaan reguler seperti Musdes serta Musrenbangdes dalam rangka membahas rancangan RPJMDesa, RKPDesa, dan APBDesa lantaran tidak tersedia akses serta peluang apapun untuk menyuarakan kebutuhan kolektifnya kepada Pemerintahan Desa. Output kegiatan menunjukkan telah ada benih kesadaran kolektif dari semua peserta pertemuan untuk mengambil peran dalam forum perencanaan-penganggaran tahun mendatang dan mendayagunakannya sebagai media penyaluran aspirasi, kepentingan, atau kebutuhan mereka kepada Pemerintah Desa dan BPD. Mereka sangat menyadari adanya beragam kebutuhan prioritas yang harus diperjuangkan artikulasinya, baik secara langsung maupun melalui perantaraan para pengelola Lembaga Kemasyarakatan Desa.

Kata Kunci : Desa, Inklusi, Partisipasi, Penganggaran, Perencanaan.

Abstract : After 23 years of reformation, one of the regulatory products that reflect the devolution and delegation of decentralized development management authority to the local government is Law No. 6/2014 on Villages which promises further community involvement, by placing the

village as the centre of regional development and not only as an object of the national programs. This citizen forum facilitation was held in the context of expanding understanding of the substance of participatory planning and budgeting and the significance of community involvement in the village development management which was carried out during August 2021 in the Bajo Village, Soromandi District, Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province by involving dozens of people, especially women's groups, as participants. The main methods applied during this facilitation to discuss everything related to the prospects, constraints, and substantive needs of the program were in the form of lectures, brainstorming, practise, and mentoring. The group of women who participated on average emphasized that they were not citizens who had been involved and in the planning-budgeting deliberations that had been held in their village. They have never experienced the atmosphere of regular civic forums such as the *Musdes* and the *Musrenbangdes* to discuss the draft of the *RPJMDesa*, the *RKPDesa*, and the *APBDesa* documents because there was no access and an opportunity to voice their collective needs to the Village Government. The activity output showed that there has been a seed of collective awareness from all participants to take a role in the planning-budgeting forums for the coming year and utilize them as a medium for channelling their aspirations, interests, or needs to the Village Government and the *BPD*. They were very aware of the various priority needs that must be fought for their articulation, both directly and through the intermediary of the Village Community Institution managers.

Keywords : Village, Inclusion, Participation, Budgeting, Planning.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

The resignation of President Soeharto on May 21, 1998, marked the end of the authoritarian and centralized governance system in Indonesia. The demand for decentralization or democratization at the local level as the core pillar of political reform was increasingly prominent at that time. The saturation of the people over the deteriorating conditions or the absence of welfare was the main reason for the emergence of social movements that carried the agenda of ending the duration of the New Order government because Soeharto was deemed no longer fit to carry out his longer mandate as President of the Republic of Indonesia. Before the reform era, all responsibilities, authorities, and functions related to governance were fully in the hands and control of the central government. This kind of centralization practice places the central government as the main actor in administering the government (Hidayat, 2016).

The ongoing political reforms have sown new hope for the realization of democratic life at the local level as substantive efforts have been initiated by various actors to eliminate the centralization of governance. It is well realized that without democracy, decentralization

will only multiply the various problems created previously by the centralistic and clientelistic system, because the relationship between democracy and decentralization is mutually reinforcing to each other, where decentralization requires the presence of democracy to be effective, on the other hand, decentralization also will deepen democracy through the expansion of the local autonomy, increased levels of responsiveness of the local government, and more effective political representation (Barter, 2013).

The fall of Soeharto has paved the way for the realization of democratization in Indonesia through the implementation of various state political development activities aimed at creating democratic governance. The political development activities carried out can take the form of (i) the development of modern democratic institutions in the political system, (ii) the dispersion of power, and (iii) political liberalization (Lay, 2012: 208-209). Accompanying the implementation of the decentralization policy, steps were also taken to cut the long distance between the local government and the community in the context of providing public services. The image of the government which seemed to have distanced itself from society during the New Order was to be restored by implementing decentralized politics which was considered the best tool to achieve the state's goals, namely providing inclusive public services and creating a more democratic collective decision-making process (Sidik, in Sugiharta, 2012: 234). Decentralization has been able to bring about several fundamental changes in the regions.

After 23 years of reformation, one of the regulatory products that reflect the devolution and delegation of authority for decentralized development management to the local government is Law No. 6/2014 on Villages. This law was passed by the government in January 2014 to provide villages with increased budget allocations and improve internal village governance. It was initiated by the government as a means to recognize the traditional rights of village communities; strengthen weak governance arrangements; and empower villages to meet their own development needs, reducing poverty and social inequality.

Law No. 6/2014 introduced several key changes, including multiple accountability mechanisms for the village head, through the introduction of a village assembly; more power and clearer election rules for the Village Consultative Body (*Badan Permusyawaratan Desa/BPD*); improved transparency, through the use of an information system (developed by the district, managed by the village government, and accessible by the community members); inter-village collaboration; and, crucially, substantially greater funding for villages (Antlov, Wetterberg, & Dharmawan, 2016).

Building village independence must start from a good village planning process, and be followed by good program governance. Effective rural development is not solely due to opportunities but is the result of determining activity priority options through good planning (Kessa, 2015: 10). The villages need to have a plan because they must regulate and manage their administrative area according to the authority they have as a self-governing community. Village planning is expected to strengthen the government's rights and authority while optimizing the sources of wealth or village assets as the main capital of development. Village development planning is a process of stages of activities organized by the Village Government by involving the *BPD* and elements of the community in a participatory manner to utilize and allocate village resources to achieve development goals. Participatory village development can be interpreted as a development management system in villages and rural areas coordinated by the Village Head by prioritizing the principles of togetherness, kinship and cooperation to realize the mainstreaming of peace and social justice (Article 1, the *Permendagri* No. 114/2014).

Constitutionally, the space for the participation of villagers in development planning is at the moment of preparation or discussion of the *RPJMDesa*, the *RKPDesa*, and the *APBDesa* documents. The involvement of citizens in regular civic forums that are categorized as "invited space of participation" is a mandate of the Village Law that must be implemented by the Village Government when holding development planning-budgeting deliberations. In other words, borrowing the argument of Fung & Wright (2003), these invited spaces mandated by the constitution should allow participants to be involved in all three areas of influence, that is, formulation, the process of passing, and implementation of public policies, including documents of village budgets. This confirms that on the village level, there are new democratic village councils that open up the possibility of grassroots democracy (Antlov, 2003b). Increasing the level and scope of community participation in the village planning and budgeting is a new mark to be applied for the sake of attaching inclusive and participatory predicates to village development management because their involvement in the development process is essential to build collective trust for all parties to act responsibly in maintaining the development outcomes (Indriyany, Hikmawan, Godjali, & Mahpudin, 2021: 7).

We should consider the sad reality that the practice of public participation in managing the development process, since the New Order administration until 7 years of the enactment of the Village Law, is still fictitious or still taking place formally. The people who attend the *Musdes* and the *Musrenbangdes* forums have not been able to communicate and fight for their

interests through the two regular citizen forums to the Village Government and the *BPD*. When applied, inclusiveness is beneficial for giving affirmations to the government policies. When this core value is ignored in all policies formulation processes, it can transform into the background of public demands to improve the performance of the state institutions (Hikmawan & Hidayat, 2016: 40).

In particular, based on the context of the Bajo Village, community participation in managing the village development also continues to show similar faces. Accountability and social inclusion in the Bajo Village are still far from expectations. This is reflected in the non-participatory and non-transparent way of budget management, in which some village officials take advantage of their formal position to satisfy their vested interests due to the village head's misunderstanding of budget management. In addition, there is a group of young people who intimidate the Village Treasurer for their benefit, plus an apathetic villager, and the community space that is not utilized optimally by the Village Government to encourage participatory development management (Hidayat, Hendra, & Iptidaiyah, 2019).

The unaccountable and inclusive condition of development management in the Bajo Village, especially in the realm of planning and budgeting which portrayed a low level of citizen participation was the underlying factor for doing this community service program with the theme "Citizen Forum on Participatory Planning and Budgeting to Promote the Inclusive Village Governance". The basic objective to be achieved through this program was to increase the understanding and awareness of residents regarding the importance of their involvement in village planning-budgeting forums through formal and informal arrangements, as stipulated in the *Permendagri* No. 114/2014 on Village Development Guidelines and the *Permendesa* No. 2/2015 on Rules and Mechanisms for Decision-Making in the Village Deliberations.

SOLUTION AND TARGET

This program was positioned as an intervention to encourage the development of citizen participation in the village planning-budgeting forums (the *Musdes* and the *Musrenbangdes*) so that their priority aspirations, needs, or interests could be channelled and then accommodated in the *RKPDesa* and the *APBDesa* documents. The two types of planning forums are spaces for public participation that must be utilized as much as possible by residents to voice their various interests to the Village Government and the *BPD*. Therefore, increasing citizens' awareness of the importance of their participation in the *Musdes* and the

Musrenbangdes deliberations became the starting point and fundamental orientation of this community service activity. The identification of community needs in the domain of basic services (education, health, and population administration) supported by their strengthened commitment to voice these aspirations to the Village Government and the *BPD* through village planning-budgeting forums became the basic output of this activity. In other words, increasing the intention and awareness of residents to voice their needs in regular civic forums at the village level was positioned as a substantive benefit that is expected to be realized.

This activity was designed only to provide understanding or awareness to residents about the significance of their participation in the village budgeting and planning deliberations through the citizen forum which was formed by the facilitators with the participants because it could be considered as an excellent training ground for wider political involvement, where people learn to argue a case, compromise, relate to a constituency and take decisions democratically (Antlov, 2004b). Villagers, especially marginalized groups, would be encouraged to be actively involved in articulating their interests and at the same time demanding that the village government be more responsive to the aspirations and needs of the residents. This citizen forum activity had been fully managed by the Program Team by holding several organizing meetings, both formal and informal, with villagers who were willing to voluntarily participate in the program. The main focus had been directed at providing an understanding of the meaning of participatory village planning and budgeting.

METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION

This community service activity has been carried out during August 2021 which was divided into three main stages, namely (a) planning, (b) implementation, and (c) evaluation of program interventions. The Community Service Planning stage included a variety of activities consisting of (1) the Program Implementer coordinating with *stakeholders* in the Bajo Village to discuss the design of this citizen forum program. The coordination, in particular, was directed to the Village Head, Chairman of the *BPD*, and several residents; (2) the Implementing Team and program participants agreed on a written cooperation agreement to jointly support all substantive stages of this community service; and (3) the Program Implementer harmonized the tentative schedule of activities that have been prepared previously with the readiness and free time of program participants for the effectiveness and efficiency of all stages of the program. This planning stage has been held twice on August 2, 2021, and August 9, 2021.

Regarding the implementation stages, there were two types of learning processes that have been implemented, namely (i) learning inside and outside the classroom on August 15, 2021, and (ii) mentoring and assistance, both face-to-face (August 22, 2021) and remotely (23-31 August 2021). Through these two learning stages, program participants received the capacity building in the form of knowledge and skills and then practice them in the field. In the end, the facilitation of a citizen forum was expected to be able to encourage interactive communication between residents and the Village Government. The main approaches that were always applied during the facilitation period were all matters relating to the prospects, constraints, and substantive needs of the program consist of: (a) Lectures, Discussions, and/or Brainstorming; (b) Simulation; and (c) Assistance. After the principal concepts were presented to the participants and discussed intensively with the facilitators, practice and mentoring became complementary methods to support the proficiencies of the participants who came from the Village Marginal Women's Group (*Kelompok Perempuan Marginal Desa/KPMD*) consisting of 25 people. This community was established in 2016 as a forum for communication and self-actualization of several housewives who live in the Bajo Village.

Associated with activities at the planning and implementation stages of community services as described above, the evaluation step of the implementing team led to important things that have and have not been able to understand by program participants, namely (1) problems or issues, (2) solutions, (3) who is most likely to implement the solution, and (4) how it can influence important actors in the village. In addition, the evaluation was also related to the program outcomes that have been carried out, namely measuring whether or not they were effective in encouraging the increase in the political efficacy of program participants. If the level of success is adequate, then the target audience segment for this community service will be expanded, not limited to the locus program village, but also targeting other villages in the Bima Regency. Weaknesses, limitations, and obstacles encountered in this program will also be a separate evaluation material to refine intervention strategies in the same village in the future.

RESULTS AND OUTPUTS

As mentioned earlier, the planning stage of this community service program was carried out for the first time on August 2, 2021, where the program team visited personnel from the village marginal women's groups to convey information on the plan to organize a citizen forum and ask their willingness to be involved in it. Meanwhile, on August 9, 2021,

the Program Team communicated the activities of this citizen forum to the Head of the *BPD* and the Head of the Bajo Village so that both of them would be willing to support the implementation of this agenda. The implementation of this reflective learning facilitation began with a meeting for further socialization of the substance of the Village Law and the significance of civic engagement to program participants to support the dissemination of information that had been previously conveyed at the community service planning stage. This follow-up socialization was held on August 15, 2021, and took place in the Village Office Hall, which was attended by 25 participants namely 24 women from the *KPMD* personnel and 1 male from the youth element. This facilitation was a manifestation of the type of learning inside and outside the classroom.

The facilitators emphasized several things that intersect with the issue of village development management oriented to improving the welfare of life and poverty alleviation through the fulfilment of basic needs, development of facilities and infrastructure, development of local economic potential, and sustainable use of natural resources. In this framework, the village government is given the authority to manage governance and implementation of development independently to improve the quality of life of the residents. The facilitators also emphasized the main principle of participatory planning and budgeting, as argued by DESA (2005: 4), that “It seeks to ensure that citizens are involved in identifying development priorities, policies, programs and activities that require budget or resource allocations. It provides opportunities for citizens to participate in the allocation of resources for the implementation of priority policies. In the application of this approach, it is also necessary to ensure that it is in favour of the poor, women, children, and must also pay attention to environmental sustainability. This is important not only to ensure that the voices of the poor and women are heard through their involvement but also to help the government ensure that efforts to fulfil citizens' rights in the form of good public services are fulfilled.”

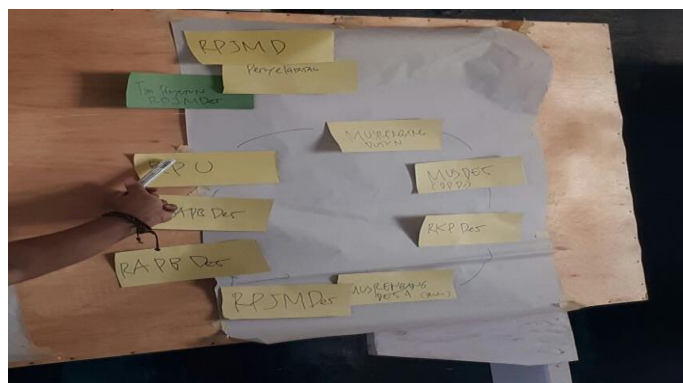


Picture 1. The Processes of the Citizen Forum Facilitation

As the application of the participant-centred learning approach, the facilitators asked

all participants to discuss the practices of contemporary development management in the Bajo village which is contradictory to the principle of participatory planning-budgeting. Referring to the results of the discussion, several facts were found that (a) the Village Vulnerable Group (*Kelompok Rentan Desa/KRD*) had never been involved in the planning and budgeting forums that had been organized by the Village Government or the *BPD*. They were always escaped from the scope of the list of the *Musdes* and the *Musrenbangdes* participants who were officially invited by the Village Government or the *BPD*; (b) In addition, they were completely unaware that there is an informal route that can be taken to become participants in the village planning-budgeting forum as stated in the *Permendes* No. 2/2015; and (c) This lack of understanding was further exacerbated by the reluctance of the Village Government and/or the *BPD* to inform the schedule for organizing regular citizen forums through unofficial channels as mandated by regulations.

The *KRD* who participated in the meeting on average emphasized that they were not citizens who had been involved in the village planning-budgeting forum that had been organized by the Village Government and the *BPD*. In other words, they have never experienced the atmosphere of village planning forums such as the *Musdes* and the *Musrenbangdes* to formulate or discuss the draft of the *RPJMDesa*, the *RKPDesa*, and the *APBDesa* documents, because there was no access and an opportunity for them to voice their collective needs to the Village Government.



Picture 2. The Metaplan of the Village Development Cycles

The elaboration of the content of the Village Law and its derivative regulations (such as the *Permendagri* No. 114/2014 and the *Permendes* No. 2/2015) which are closely related to the issue of participatory village planning and budgeting, as conveyed by the facilitators, ultimately yielded adequate results in terms of increasing knowledge residents as reflected in: (i) Various proposals related to their needs have also been formulated together (although only in the context of facilitation) which will later be submitted to the Village government and the

BPD; (ii) The seeds of awareness to participate in the village planning-budgeting forums have emerged in several participants, referring to the limited discussions they had about the significance of community participation in the village development management that took place outside the meeting forum between 5 to 6 people simultaneously, increasingly showing the stretching of their intentions and passion to be actively involved in managing the village development with the Village government and the *BPD*; and (iii) The predicate of being passive citizens and having no experience of participation in regular citizenship forums will be eliminated immediately by utilizing the informal channels and official channels that have been provided by regulations, to involve themselves in the village planning-budgeting forum the following year.

Referring to this story of changes, it can be concluded that there has been a seed of collective awareness from all participants to take a role in the planning-budgeting forum for the coming year (especially 2022) and utilize it as a medium for channelling their aspirations, interests, or needs to the Village Government and the *BPD*. In other words, most of the *KRD* is well aware of the priority needs that they must strive for articulation, both directly and through the intermediary of the managers of the Village Community Institutions (*Lembaga Kemasyarakatan Desa/LKD*) such as the *PKK* and the *Karang Taruna* to the Bajo Village Government.

After the facilitation of learning inside and outside the classroom, the next stages continued in the form of face-to-face on August 22, 2021, but not a formal meeting as was held in the previous week, but informal interactions in the houses of the *KPMD* personnel. During the period 23-31 August 2021, mentoring and assistance was held remotely with all personnel of the *KPMD* via mobile phones and social media to discuss the potential for various substantive issues (related to women's basic needs) to be articulated to the *BPD* and the Village Government so that they can be listed in the *RKPDesa* and the *APBDesa* documents for the coming fiscal year. During this mentoring and remote assistance period, the Program Team also evaluated the effectiveness of this Citizen Forum intervention to formulate the next agenda for repetition, replication, and/or broadening of its scope.

CONCLUSION

Through this citizen forum facilitation on participatory planning and budgeting, it is hoped that the target community can practice self-involvement at the highest level in regular civic forums, namely the *Musdes RKPDesa*, the *Musrenbangdes RKPDesa*, and the *Musdes*

APBDesa which are held annually by the *BPD* and/or the Village Government because these forums can be utilized as a means of articulating their priority needs, aspirations, or interests to the Village Government so that it can be accommodated in development planning and budgeting documents. Accommodations based on various needs, especially those that have been overlooked by the Village Government and the *BPD*, in the planning and budgeting documents are a guarantee for each citizen to also enjoy the cake of the village development so that the road to prosperity is wide open by utilizing the availability of the Village Original Income, National Village Fund Disbursement, Village Budget Allocation from the Regency Government, and other sources of Village Income. In this framework, the Bajo Village Government must be more responsive to the demands of opening access to participation in regular civic forums submitted by residents. They are also expected to be able to accommodate all the priority needs of residents without exception, in planning-budgeting documents so that public welfare-oriented village development activities can be realized immediately.

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