

The Principle and Characteristics of Good Enough Governance in the Cash for Work Program in Mekar Mulya Village

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Abstract

The Reform Era has led to Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages to realize decentralization to encourage good governance. Good governance was initially used in governance reform. However, good governance encountered many obstacles and was criticized for applying the one-size-fits-for-all principle. It was renewed with the concept of Good Enough Governance (GEG). The Labor-intensive Cash Program (*Padat Karya Tunai-PKT*) is one of the reform programs representing good governance. Cash for Work, as a rural empowerment program, still fails to reach its objectives. One example of Cash for Work failure happened in Mekar Mulya, a village in Sematu District, Lamandau Regency, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. This study aimed to describe and analyze the application of GEG principles in Cash for Work in Mekar Mulya Village. The research was qualitative with a case study approach. Findings indicated that Cash for Work implementation did not consider GEG principles—Cash for Work activities did not include the poor, there was no analysis prior to Cash for Work implementation, and the local government set no priority.

Keywords: good enough governance, labor-intensive, cash program, village fund, policy implementation

Introduction

The Reform Era has led to Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages to realize decentralization to encourage good governance. The Reform Era has brought more authority to villages around Indonesia. The central government distributed such significant funds for village development by issuing Government Regulation Number 60 of 2014 on Village Funds from the State Budget. The central government transfers the village funds to pay for village development and community empowerment, which is done through the Labor-intensive Cash Program (*Program Karya Tunai Desa - PKT*) to alleviate poverty, improve purchase power, and the rural economy. Cash for Work, as a rural empowerment program, still fails to reach its objectives. One example of Cash for Work failure happened in Mekar Mulya, a village in Sematu District, Lamandau Regency, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. Cash for Work activities did not include the poor—Cash for Work activities only involved five workers, so it was not labor-intensive, and the workers were outsiders.

Cash for Work was lack of assistance and guidance from the local village and district assistants. There were also delays in starting Cash for Work. Villages did not have human resources capable of making Budget Planning and building pictures. There was also an

indication that some villages had contractors to do Cash for Work activities when Cash for Work must be labor-intensive involving local people. Problems in Cash for Work started from planning, implementing, supervising, and assistance to regulations and human resources.

Cash for Work is one of the reform programs representing good governance. However, good governance encountered obstacles and received criticism for its one-size-fits-for-all principle. Due to their limitation, it would be rather impossible for developing countries to practice all the good governance principles. Grindle and Mason (2002) proposed good “enough” governance (GEG) as an alternative to good governance implementation. With this GEG principle, developing countries only need to prioritize what is truly needed by the country and people—the focus is on solving the problems at hand. Based on the background, we were interested to further examine the Cash for Work implementation in Mekar Mulya Village from the GEG perspective with all its challenges in the field.

Literature Review

Good Governance

Good governance refers to a healthy government system with a vision and mission capable of doing the tasks and functions as mandated by the people (Addink, 2019; Rewansyah, 2012; Weiss, 2000). Governance is good if it fulfills three requirements of integration, harmony, and interdependence—if it fails to fulfill the three, then the governance is bad. Each component has its role: (1) the state lays the foundation for equity, justice, and peace, creating a conducive political and legal environment for development; (2) the private sector lays the foundation for economic growth, job opportunities, and development; and (3) the civil society, lays the foundation for liberty, equality, responsibility, and self-expression (Weiss, 2000). Based on Law Number 28 of 1999 on Good Governance, Indonesia has seven principles for good governance: (1) the principle of legal certainty, (2) the principle of orderly state administration, (3) the principle of public interest, (4) the principle of openness, (5) the principle of proportionality, (6) the principle of professionalism, and (7) the principle of accountability.

In reality, good governance is not always “good”. Good governance has been criticized for several weaknesses. The concept has experienced many biases or deviations, both at the level of concept derivation and policy implementation. Bettcher (2017) also put forward three criticisms of good governance: (1) not all countries need good governance; (2) governance cannot be improved effectively even through conscious efforts; and (3) the standards set by developed countries are beyond the reach of developing countries and provide them with inappropriate criteria.

Good “Enough” Governance

Good enough governance (GEG) refers to the minimum acceptable government performance and civil society involvement that does not significantly impede economic and political development and allows poverty alleviation initiatives to progress (Grindle and Mason, 2002; Grindle, 2007). Therefore, the concept of good enough governance also talks about governance interventions, especially in policy reform. The GEG concept suggests that

not all government shortcomings need to be addressed in one go, institutions and capacities are products of time, and government achievements can also be reversed. There are several principles in the implementation of GEG (Grindle & Mason, 2002) as follows:

- a) What's the payoff for poverty reduction—poverty alleviation efforts would be more effective if they reduce the focus on government and pay more attention to strengthening the political influence of the poor within the civic society.
- b) Thinking in time—there must be an understanding of important and less important changes, sequence of changes, and alternative ways to improve government performance.
- c) Thinking strategically about priorities—priorities can be better set if there is a good understanding of which actions result in more efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness.
- d) Who needs to do it—it refers to available human resources since much of the good governance agenda is about what governments need to do to achieve better results.

GEG contains several elements reflected in the process of policy and institutional reform (Grindle, 2007), as follows:

- a) *Arena* is a place or environment where the policy is implemented. The arena itself can be divided into agenda setting, design, adoption, implementation, and sustainability.
- b) *Interests* and *institutions* focus on assessing the context of governance reforms and how the content affects institutional interests and capacities.
- c) *Actions* and *choices* refer to the steps chosen and taken. Good governance hardly contributes to poverty reduction.

Cash for Work Program (*Padat Karya Tunai* - PKT)

Cash for Work (*Padat Karya Tunai* - PKT) is a rural community empowerment program, especially for the poor and marginalized groups, focusing on productivity and using local human resources, capital, and technology to provide additional income, alleviate poverty, and increase community welfare. Cash for Work objectives include:

- a) opening up employment through labor-intensive development programs paid in cash;
- b) growing the sense of togetherness, cooperation, and participation of village communities;
- c) improving access for the poor, women, children, and marginalized groups to basic education and healthcare services;
- d) increasing rural income, and
- e) generating social and economic activities in villages.

The General Guidelines for Cash for Work in villages in 2018 state the following groups as the target of the program:

- a) unemployed: rural community members, both men and women, but not children, with no jobs, being laid off from work, and are currently looking for job opportunities;
- b) underemployed: rural community members with less than normal working hours (<35 hours per week) and farmers experiencing famine or are waiting for the planting or harvest time;
- c) poor people: rural community members with monthly percapita income under the poverty line; and
- d) stunted children: rural community members having under-fives with nutritional problems.

Based on the general guidelines for the implementation of Cash for Work, the types of activities that can be carried out in the Cash for Work include:

- a) construction and/or rehabilitation of rural infrastructure and facilities based on the list of village authorities, including improvement of river channels and irrigation, construction and/or repair of village-scale roads and bridges and boat moorings;
- b) utilization of land to increase production, including in forest areas for agriculture, forestry, plantation, farm, and fisheries;
- c) other productive activities such as the development of tourist villages, creative economy, development of local economic potential by encouraging entrepreneurship, management of agricultural production, and management of service businesses and small industries;
- d) community empowerment, including waste management, residential environmental management, renewable energy development, and provision and distribution of additional food for children (infants and toddlers); and
- e) other activities not directly related to the completion of the physical work of buildings but support the successful implementation of the physical work, for example, driving a vehicle for transporting materials and work tools.

Cash for Work is one form of public policy set by the central government to empower the community to alleviate poverty. The role of leaders is so vital in public policy—without a leader with good leadership skills, public policy will be in vain. The constellation of leadership in public policy can be described as follows:

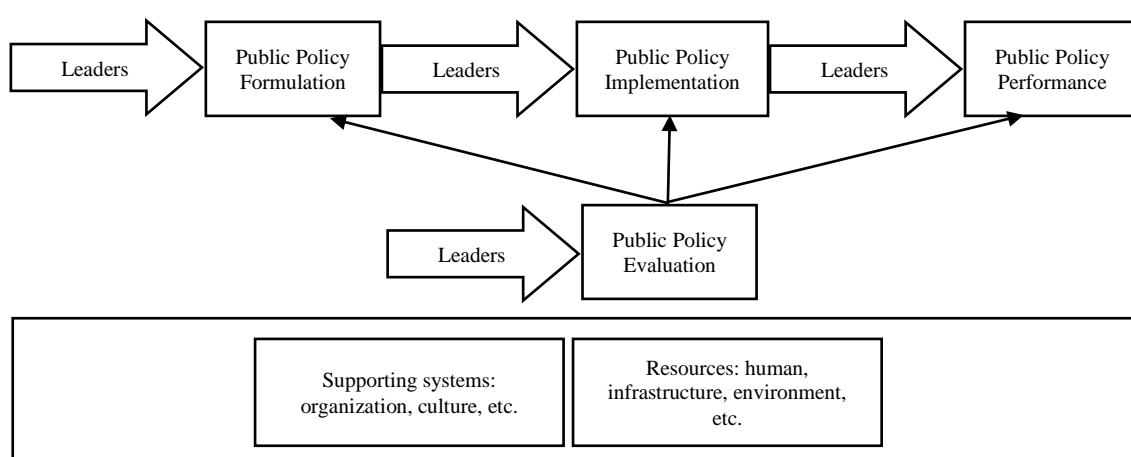


Figure 1. The Role of Leaders at Each Stage

Source: (Nugroho, 2018)

Conceptual Framework

Based on the explanation, the conceptual framework is as follows:

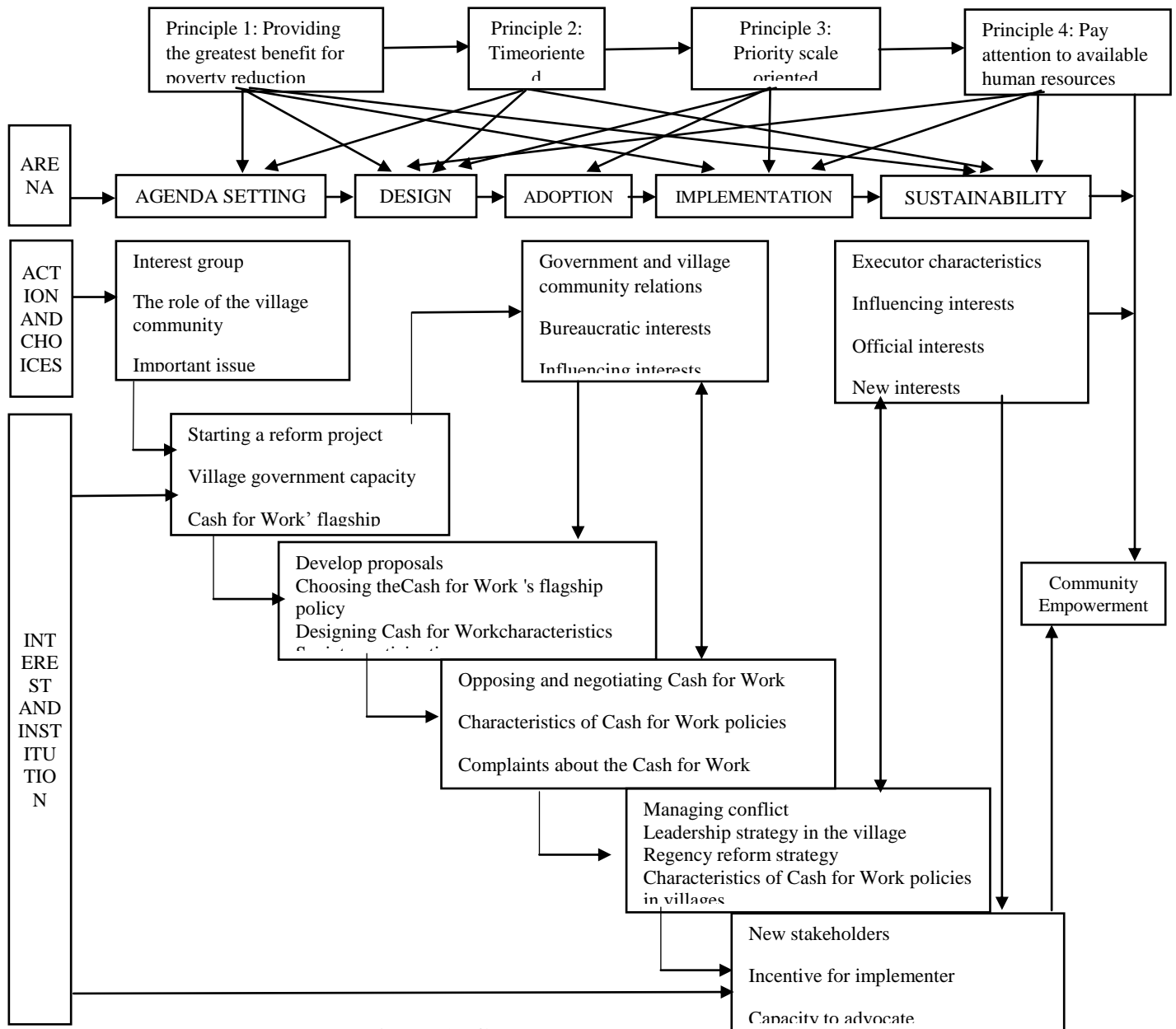


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework
Source: Adapted from Grindle (2007)

Research Method

Research Design

This research was descriptive qualitative with a case study approach. The researcher conducts an in-depth exploration of a program, event, process, and activity on one or more people; a case study is bound to a certain time and activities. The researcher continuously collects detailed data using different data collection methods (Creswell, 2016; Starman, 2020).

Research Location and Focus

The study took place in Mekar Mulya Village, Sematu District, Lamandau Regency, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. The research focused on:

- 1) the application of GEG principles in the Cash for Work program as follows: (a) providing the greatest benefit for poverty reduction in Mekar Mulya Village, (b) time-oriented, (c) priority scale oriented, and (4) paying attention to available human resources; and
- 2) the characteristics of the policy arena, institutions and interests, actions and choices that support GEG principles in Cash for Work implementation in Mekar Mulya Village.

Research Data

The data sources consisted of informants, phenomena or events, and documents. Informants included the village head, the head of the Village Consultative Body (*Badan Permusyawaratan Desa – BPD*), the head of the Management Team (*Tim Pengelola Kegiatan - TPK*), the district head, experts on Village Community Development and Empowerment Program (*Program Pembangunan dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Desa - P3MD*), and the head of the Village Empowerment Office (*Dinas Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Desa-DPMD*). The data types were primary data (observations, interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires) and secondary data (data from the Central Bureau of Statistics, books, reports, journals, and others).

Data Collection Technique

Data collection techniques consisted of documentation, interviews, and direct observations (Yin, 2009).

Data Validity

The data validity in qualitative research refers to credibility (internal validity), transferability, reliability, and objectivity (Creswell, 2016). Triangulation is necessary to test the data validity by utilizing the sources, methods, investigators, and theories (Denzin, 2009).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using pattern match analysis. Pattern match is an analytical technique in which researchers compare observation data and empirical data. If these two patterns match, they can be used to strengthen the data analysis process. By using pattern match analysis, researchers may easily obtain valid data in the research process (Yin, 2009).

Findings and Discussion

Cash for Work Implementation in Mekar Mulya Village

The development priorities in Mekar Mulya Village are based on the mid-term development plans (*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Desa – RPJMDes*), including the construction of health facilities, economic improvement of MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) and village markets, building a bridge and village gates, road improvements, agricultural irrigation, clean drinking water supply facilities, agro-tourism, and formal and non-formal education infrastructure. In implementing Cash for

Work in Mekar Mulya Village, workers came from the village community living around the Cash for Work project location. The workers' educational backgrounds were junior and senior high school.

Principle 1: Providing the Greatest Benefit for Poverty Reduction

The principle of providing the greatest benefits for poverty alleviation can be seen from three indicators, which are as follows:

a) Reform agenda to alleviate poverty

Cash for Work in Mekar Mulya encourages economic improvement. One of the efforts was opening agrotourism in an area of 1.9 hectares planted with vegetables and equipped with playground and foto spots. Tourists could also get educated about vegetables planted in the agrotourism area. The community of Mekar Mulya Village experienced a rise in income from the agrotourism sector. The village government now focuses on encouraging the village community to improve their economy.

b) Supervision on efforts to alleviate poverty

BPD played an active role in Cash for Work by giving suggestions and recommendations for the program. BPD, together with other government officials, also supervised the implementation of Cash for Work to check if the program was done according to plans. It showed the harmonious relationship between BPD and the village government.

c) The effects of poverty alleviation through Cash for Work as a reform agenda

The effects could not be seen clearly because Cash for Work did not involve the target groups (the poor and marginalized) but the young people living around Cash for Work site projects.

Principle 2: Time-Oriented

The principle comes with three indicators:

a) Efforts to analyze the program

Analysis was simple because it was based on the experience of the village government. There were no comprehensive measures nor indicators to evaluate Cash for Work.

b) Efforts to employ village characteristics

Cooperation has been part of the community culture for a long time. There was no challenge in finding Cash for Work workers because most villagers are used to cooperate with others.

c) Government regulations to support Cash for Work

The village government had not issued any regulations on Cash for Work. The village simply followed the regulations from the central government and regency government. The village only issued a regulation related to TPK and officials to manage village funds.

Principle 3: Priority Scale Oriented

The principle can be seen in the following three indicators:

a) Policy priorities related to village development

RPJMDes Mekar Mulya 2018-2024 mentions the following development priorities: (1) creating village information systems, (2) practicing good governance and providing free public services, (3) increasing village original revenue, (4) developing and improving public facilities (including roads, healthcare services, education, and religions), (5) providing incentives for early childhood educators, (6) developing business units of the Village Owned Enterprise (farming, livestock, and plantation), (7) making a village gate, (8) improving human resources and village capacity, (9) improving sport facility and activities, (10) improving involvement of youth organizations, (11) providing basic entrepreneur training, (12) building clean water systems, (13) improving skills of village officials, (14) developing and improving community markets, (15) improving cooperation among all elements of the village, and (16) synergizing development programs between the village, district, regency, provincial, and central government. It can be seen that the government of Mekar Mulya Village has made efforts to optimize their potential for development in all sectors, including village officials, the community, and institutional.

b) Policy priorities related to community and poor community empowerment

From the list of priorities mentioned in RPJMDes Mekar Mulya 2018-2024, only five priorities are directly related to community empowerment: (1) developing business units of the Village Owned Enterprise (farming, livestock, and plantation), (2) improving human resources and village capacity, (3) improving the involvement of youth organizations, (4) providing basic entrepreneur training, and (5) improving cooperation among all elements of the village. However, none of these priorities are directly related to the empowerment of the poor. It does not mean that Cash for Work neglects the poor. Indeed, empowerment for the poor is in the form of assistance both indirect and cash assistance.

c) Policy priorities related to program implementation

Based on our observations, there were no priorities directly related to Cash for Work implementation because there was no further guideline on village policy related to Cash for Work. The village only prepared a general guideline for Cash for Work, such as appointing the management team. The village did not prepare technical guidelines.

Principle 4: Paying Attention to Available Human Resources

The principle is manifested in three actions:

1) The role of the community in program planning, implementation, and supervision

The community played a dominant role in Cash for Work—the community must plan, do, and supervise Cash for Work. One of the advantages of Cash for Work is the cooperation principle—Cash for Work does not seek profit as it aims to serve the public and empower the community.

2) Role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and the press in program implementation

NGOs were not involved in Cash for Work implementation. However, the media like TVRI (the national television channel) and Harian Kalteng Pos (newspaper) had been employed to spread the news on development programs in Mekar Mulya.

3) Village government efforts to ensure the success of the program implementation

The management team depended on parties from outside the village for budget planning and designs that projects were delayed. BPD asked the team to improve its capacity through

training and technical guidance funded by the local budget. If the regency or district government does not provide the budget, the village government must provide the budget. The management team must not be dependent on external consultants.

Characteristics of Policy Arena, Institutions and Interests, Actions and Choices that Support the Application of GEG Principles in Cash for Work Implementation in Mekar Mulya

GEG in the policy and institutional reform process is divided into 3 (three) elements, which are described as follows:

1) **Arena**—the characteristics of Cash for Work can be seen in the agenda-setting, design, adoption, implementation, and sustainability:

a) *Agenda-Setting*

The Cash for Work program is determined through official channels such as Development Planning Deliberation (*Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan Desa - Musdes*) and unofficial channels such as mass media and community organizations (NGOs, social organizations, and others). The village government of Mekar Mulya determined the Cash for Work agenda through *Musdes*.

b) *Adoption*

The focus is on planning Cash for Work policy and how it will be socialized, negotiated, and agreed upon by stakeholders. An interview with the head of Mekar Mulya Village revealed that Cash for Work was always socialized in village meetings. The indirect socialization was done using online media or posters.

c) *Implementation*

The policy content focuses on the interests affected by Cash for Work, benefits of Cash for Work changes resulted from Cash for Work, the position of policymakers in Cash for Work, Cash for Work implementers, and resources for Cash for Work. Cash for Work workers were the young people joining the youth organization (*Karang Taruna*). The wage they got from Cash for Work was saved on the organization's cash. The following pictures show the implementation of Cash for Work in Mekar Mulya.



Figure 3. Cash for Work Activities in Mekar Mulya at Night

The policy content focuses on the authority, interests, and strategies of Cash for Work actors, the characteristics of institutions and officials in Cash for Work, and the compliance and response of the community against Cash for Work. The village head guided Cash for Work implementation, and the management team was accountable to the village head. Cash for Work workers did not involve the target group because the workers were people living around the Cash for Work site projects.

d) *Cash for Work Sustainability*

It focuses on the conditions affecting Cash for Work so the program can be maintained. Interview with the head of Mekar Mulya Village revealed that evaluation was done continuously within the village's internal stakeholders—there was no evaluation on Cash for Work by the regency and district government.

2) Interests and Institutional

Interests and institutional can be seen from the agenda-setting, adoption, implementation, and sustainability as follows:

- a) *Agenda-setting* focuses on interest groups, community roles, executive roles, important issues, and media roles in Cash for Work. Interview with the head of Mekar Mulya Village revealed that the village head expected the community would ask for clarity about the program and give suggestions—the village government was always ready to respond. Some online local media once wrote about Cash for Work in Mekar Mulya.
- b) *Adoption of Cash for Work* focuses on the relationship between the government and the community, the bureaucratic interest, and other interests related to Cash for Work. The government always develops the trust of the community because without the support and trust from the community, the program may fail. The bureaucratic interest deals with the village's effort to empower the community to manage the agrotourism sector for additional income. The challenge is related to the skills of local village assistants (*Pendamping Lokal Desa - PLD*). Although the assistants already understand what to do in the field, the village head expects that the assistants can play a bigger role in facilitating Cash for Work.
- c) *Implementation and sustainability* focus on the implementation characteristics, the interests affecting Cash for Work, the interests of the officials, and other interests in Cash for Work. The village government expects continuous guidance from the supra village, be it the district or regency government. The guidance from the local village assistants was considered insufficient due to their limited knowledge. The potential of the village has not been fully optimized, such as the village market, the agrotourism site, the village land, human resources, and so on.

3) Actions and Choices

Actions and choices can be seen from the agenda-setting, adoption, implementation, design, and sustainability as follows:

- a) *Agenda setting* focuses on starting reform projects through implementer capacity, featured policies, and strategies for featured policies in Cash for Work implementation. The featured policy of Mekar Mulya is the development of the agrotourism site to improve community income and welfare and educate the community about herbs and medicinal plants. It has been

planned in the village budget because the village government has planned to support the program.

- b) *Program design* focuses on developing a proposal by planning team characteristics and community involvement in Cash for Work. The community participation in Mekar Mulya was good. The people were enthusiastic about Cash for Work. They were involved from planning, implementation, supervision to evaluation. The community culture of cooperation is a valuable resource for Cash for Work.
- c) *Program design* focuses on the challenge and negotiation of reformation through policy characteristics, opposition complaints, opposition strategies, and reform strategies in Cash for Work. City or regency governments, assisted by village facilitators, encourage the involvement of local workers in self-managed community groups in accordance with the objectives of Cash for Work. The community has submitted no complaints about Cash for Work implementation—everyone is happy and can accept Cash for Work implementation. There were delays in reporting Cash for Work due to changes in the management team of Cash for Work.
- d) *Cash for Work implementation* focuses on conflict management through leadership strategies, renewal strategies, and Cash for Work policy implementation. Mekar Mulya Village had no significant leadership strategy and renewal strategy to make a difference due to the absence of rules in the general guidelines for implementing Cash for Work issued by the central government. Therefore, a reform strategy related to Cash for Work must be issued by the regional, district, and village governments. At the village level, as the object of Cash for Work activities, the village headleadership will influence Cash for Work.
- e) *Cash for Work sustainability* focuses on new stakeholders, incentives for implementers, evaluation of implementation, and advocacy or negotiation. Interview results showed that the community was involved in planning, implementation, and supervision. However, the community found it hard to give suggestions due to their local custom of *ewuh pakewuh* (feeling uneasy about criticizing directly and openly). Cash for Work can be sustainable if all stakeholders take part in maintaining the program. Regular evaluation is needed before, during, and after implementation to measure the success of Cash for Work.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussion, the following conclusions are presented:

- 1) Cash for Work implementation in Mekar Mulya did not fully apply GEG principles. The program did not involve the poor as the target group; instead, it involved the young people from the youth organization living around the project site as workers. There was no analysis prior to the program implementation and no priority set by the government in the implementation.
- 2) Cash for Work implementation in Mekar Mulya did not fully consider GEG principles. Some agenda-setting did not use official channels optimally. Stakeholders and related parties such as the media and NGOs, the local assistants, and the officials were not involved completely in the program. There was no regulation on Cash for Work made by the village government. There was no evaluation, guidance, and supervision from the government. There was also limited socialization and training for the management team.

Based on the findings and discussion, the following suggestions are given:

- 1) Local governments must have policy champions to determine technical guidelines for Cash for Work, especially the one related to the poor as the target group.
- 2) There must be analysis on Cash for Work implementation, especially to determine which villages are ready for Cash for Work and which are not so that policy can reach its objectives.
- 3) The village officials must be trained to determine village priorities.
- 4) There must be programs to improve community capacity, especially the management team as Cash for Work implementers and the local community as Cash for Work workers.

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