



PROMOTING COMMUNITY-BASED VILLAGE SUPERVISION



Eceibertus Witu/SMERU

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The revelation of cases of budget misappropriation in some regions demonstrates that Village Law supravillage supervisory practices experience shortcomings. This policy brief recommends a model of village supervision by the community that adopts four principles of social accountability: relevance, publicity, refutation, and enforcement; informing all the stages of village governance administration from planning to evaluation. In this model, supervision can be more substantive and effective, instead of being largely restricted to administrative matters, as is commonly the case.

Introduction

Misappropriation of Village Funds (VF) in several regions has contributed to increased discourse about the effectiveness of the implementation of Law No. 6/2014 on Villages (Village Law, VL). The Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) found 110 cases of VF corruption from 2016 to August 2017 with estimated state losses to have increased from Rp10.4 billion in 2016 to Rp30 billion by 2017.¹ Arrests of several officials in Kabupaten Pamekasan in August 2017 have resulted in heightened public concerns about the effectiveness of VF.

The central government responded to this situation by creating a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to involve the *kecamatan* (subdistrict) police chiefs (*kapolsek*) in the supervision of VF by October 2017. The implications of this initiative are becoming increasingly evident in the study locations. In Jambi, the regional police office issued guidelines for community police officers

(*Bhabinkamtibmas*) to evaluate the conformity of VF to its use priorities. In Wonogiri, a *kapolsek* visited the village to inquire about the Village Budget (APB Desa) and Budget Plan (RAB). Meanwhile, in Banyumas, villages are now required to submit accountability letters (SPJ) to the *kapolsek* (Radar Banyumas, 2017).

On the other hand, village activists and nongovernmental organizations have recommended empowering villagers and strengthening local institutions such as the Village Consultative Body (BPD) and village community institutions (LKD). The Indonesian Association of Village Heads (Apdesi) has rejected police involvement in VL implementation expressing concern that village apparatus and communities would be open to intimidation by police in managing

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their budgets (Tribunnews, 2017). President Joko Widodo has contributed to the discussion by encouraging communities to be more actively involved in village supervision to ensure more effective outcomes (Kompas, 2017).

The Need for Community-Based Village Administration Supervision

Village administration supervision by communities is seen as essential for more effective VL implementation due to four main reasons. Firstly, theoretically, social accountability should play a more significant role for both village government and community parties. For village governments, this ensures that the public affairs administration is rightly targeted, is conducted in a fair manner, and is of good quality; prevents misuse or corruption, and enables the inclusion of many resources for successful development (World Bank, 2003).

Social accountability also encourages the community to be more aware of village development, and fosters their willingness to be involved and take responsibility of public affairs issues and solutions, as well as other matters that can improve their quality of life. Good local practices in the Middle East and Africa have demonstrated that giving villagers room and authority to be actively involved in supervision can reform the administration, outreach, and quality of basic health and education services, including addressing issues that have thus far been latent (read more in Brix et al., 2015).

Secondly, in terms of regulations, village supervision as covered in VL articles and VL derivative regulations emphasizes community guidance and empowerment functions, rather than investigation and enforcement.² At the supravillage level, this mandate is primarily given to *kabupaten*—not to the central government—emphasizing positive guidance, such as empowerment and education as well as village institution reform.

Thirdly, the principles of recognition and subsidiarity should be treated comprehensively, including in the context of supervision. Therefore, all village affairs must put local community unity as priority. Furthermore, problem solving or conflict resolution at the village level thus far accentuates internal discussion and resolution, for example, through deliberation between community leaders and customary leaders. The presence of “new actor” in village supervision should not undermine such local practices. In other words, the supervision process needs to continue to support village dynamics.

Fourthly, on a practical level, there are still many weaknesses in VL implementation. As shown by SMERU’s baseline study conducted in late 2015, accountability practices have persisted in being predominantly upwardly focused, i.e., the submission of various village reports upwards to the *kecamatan* and *kabupaten* governments. This is merely to ensure that the village is “administratively safe” and accountable in terms of satisfying *kecamatan* and *kabupaten* governments’ monitoring of Village Government Work Plans (RKP Desa) and APB Desa.

This set of supervisory practices is not without challenges. To those *kabupaten* that have not yet delegated supervisory authority to its *kecamatan*, such as in Wonogiri, the guidance and supervision processes face the challenge of time and geographical condition. Meanwhile, *kabupaten* that have decentralized the supervision

responsibilities depend heavily on the quality of the human resources in each *kecamatan* which is not always adequate. Supervision by the inspectorate and Indonesia’s National Government Internal Auditor (BPKP) is usually only done at the end of the fiscal year using purposive sampling of villages based on complaints from citizens, news in the media, or reviews of LPJs.

At the village level, villagers are not being accustomed to complaints filing processes due to being unaware of such mechanism or hesitant at doing so, or due to lack of awareness of or concern with village affairs. This is consistent with findings of Local Solutions to Poverty (LSP, the World Bank) study at the end of 2015 in which 36.4% of respondents expressed that they did not need information about their village administration. In fact, SMERU found that villagers have perceived that the village facilitators have not optimally empowered the community to become more aware of village affairs.

On the basis of the arguments above, the central government’s intention to involve more outside actors in village supervisory processes—such as the police force—serves to increase pressure on village administrations to perform. Thus, it is essential that supervision practices place the village community at the vanguard of supervisory processes for the health of the overall framework of village development management.

The Potential Model for Community-Based Village Administration Supervision

This policy brief recommends a model of village supervision by the community that emphasizes four main principles of social accountability, namely **(i) relevance**, **(ii) publicity**, **(iii) refutation**, and **(iv) enforcement** (Daniels, 2000). Some of these principles have been practiced, more or less, in the study villages. All four are adopted at various stages of the development cycle, at the planning, implementation, and post-implementation or evaluation of village administration stages. This model does not deviate from the Regulation of Minister for Home Affairs No.114/2014 regarding the Guidelines for Village Development, but rather makes it more applicable for use (see Figure 1).

1) Planning

Beginning at the planning stage, social accountability works by developing the principle of relevance. In this regard, deliberation forums at the village level, such as *dusun* (hamlet) deliberation meetings (*musdus*) and village deliberation meetings (*musdes*), need to make rational proposals that reflect the villagers’ needs.

We recommend that the deliberation forums be expanded to improve the quality of village plans. In doing so, it will increase the number of village residents who are concerned with and have a sense of ownership in village governance affairs, including the safeguarding of planning outcomes.

Expanded forum formation might adopt the Female Deliberation Meeting model as practiced in the National Program for Community Empowerment (PNPM), optimize BPD and LKD as proposal channels, and encourage village facilitators and cadres to conduct social mapping of the poor and marginalized. The activities proposed at deliberation forums are then consolidated into a draft village development plan.

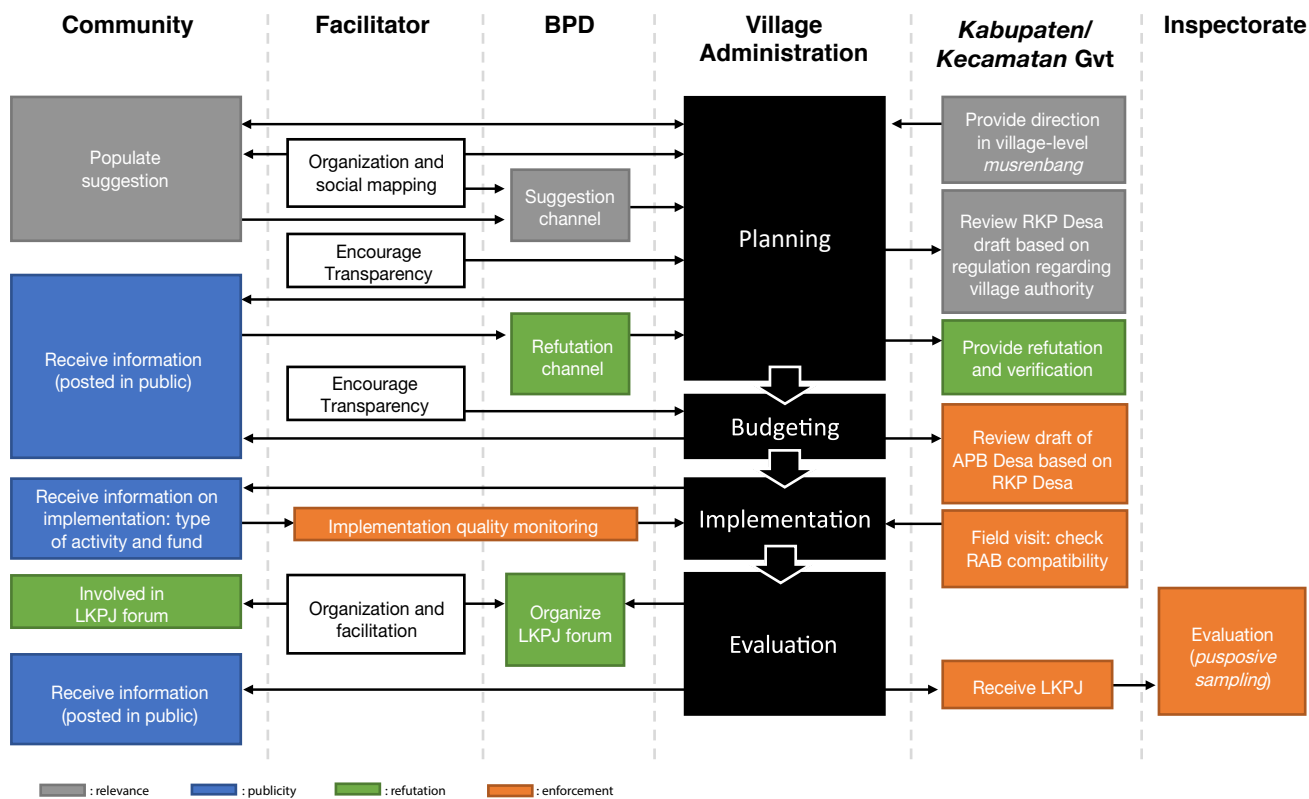


Figure 1. Community-based village supervisory model

Therefore, planning—which thus far has not gone through a deliberation process, is dominated by the elite, and merely involves making a wish-list—needs to be improved. The same applies to the *kecamatan* and *kabupaten* governments when giving directives. For example, in determining priorities of VF utilization, the directives shall be based on urgency principle and so they are contextual and not merely instructional.

Next, the model proposed here recommends that drafts of village development plans be disseminated to the public. This advances the principle of publicity as well as opens the space for village residents to possibly refute the plans. Both must consider the closest communication channel for the villagers. Here, BPD may take the role of the refutation channel. It may be done not only through face-to-face meetings but also by developing a technology-based complaint handling system using mobile phones, instant messaging services applications, social media forums, or village websites.

After being disseminated, the village development plan draft should be refined and submitted to the *kabupaten* government for review. This review process should refer to the regulation regarding village authority, making space for refutation on matters that are considered as most important and relevant to the village, even if not prioritized by the central government or the local government. Upon completion, the draft then enters the development planning deliberation (*musrenbang*) agenda to be formally discussed and established as an official village development plan document.

At present, there is generally no public dissemination of village development plan drafts in study villages, with the draft plans submitted to *kabupaten* governments without prior chance of

refutation. It means that dissemination to the community has not taken place, despite the availability of many local communication channels to do so: community radio in Banyumas, *arisan*³ in Batanghari, *yasinar*⁴ in Merangin, *slapanan*⁵ in Wonogiri, and Kelompok Umat Basis⁶ (KUB) in Ngada.

2) Budgeting

Next, in the budgeting stage—as stipulated by Minister for Home Affairs Regulation No. 113/2014 on Village Financial Management—the village government and BPD jointly formulate the budget in the village regulation draft (*raperdes*). In particular, the BPD is tasked with ensuring that the budget draft conforms to the planning consensus. After the *raperdes* has been passed, village facilitators should encourage the village government to publish the APB Desa.

In the study villages, the popular medium for publishing APB Desa is the billboard. Generally, village residents appreciate this publication because they can easily gain awareness of programs that will be implemented by the village government. In the study villages in Ngada, the BPD also disseminates the APB Desa information to *dusun* level.

3) Implementation

Publicity and enforcement are two principles that must be promoted in the implementation of activities. The community-based village supervision suggests the village governments to clearly communicate the technical information related to activities to the community. This was already found in the study villages of Central Java during the pre-implementation meetings which were used to communicate information on types of activity, RAB, activity designs, timeframes, material procurements,



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The SMERU Research Institute

Authors:
Rendy Adriyan Diningrat

Editors:
Bryan Rochelle
Budhi Adrianto

Translator:
Miki Salman

Design:
Novita Maizir

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- Jl. Cikini Raya No. 10A
Jakarta 10330, Indonesia
- +6221 3193 6336;
+6221 3193 0850
- smeru@smeru.or.id
- www.smeru.or.id
- @SMERUInstitute
- @SMERUInstitute
- The SMERU Research Institute
- The SMERU Research Institute

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recruitments, and mechanisms for distributing person-days (HOK, daily wage rate). By doing so, villagers can understand the village programs and have the opportunity to be involved, which mitigates community suspicion toward the village government.

In addition, supervision of activity implementation, which previously was conducted by the village head and activity management team (TPK) exclusively, can be expanded to involve the BPD, technical facilitators, and *kecamatan* and *kabupaten* representatives. The community should also be able to participate in handling complaints, if desired. Supervisory outcomes should then be recorded as inputs for implementation of subsequent activities.

4. Post-implementation

Then, village administration enters the evaluation stage that is conducted per semester, as stipulated in the Minister for Home Affairs Regulation No. 114/2014. In this stage, social accountability puts forward the principle of refutation, for example, by organizing an Accountability Report (LKPJ) Forum. This forum should be organized by the BPD to provide opportunities for the community to review activities implemented by the village government, including delivering monitoring results of the village activities implementation.

Village facilitators can take an active role in organizing the community to get involved and facilitate forum proceedings. The forum should formulate solutions for better governance in the future. After the evaluation, the LKPJ draft should be refined and disseminated to the public and subsequently reviewed by the *kecamatan* and *kabupaten* governments. The review results ideally become the basis for the inspectorate to select samples for their annual audit. Therefore, evaluation considerations and designs can be better targeted and more substantive.

Within the study locations, only a few villages have held LKPJ forums, such as the villages in Ngada. While the forum places the village residents only as audience, the BPD captures their demands first at *dusun* level before the forum takes place. For example, through BPD, the villagers had channeled their requests to ask the village government in seeking for the solution to the procured hand-tractors that could not be utilized.

Implementing this model overall requires some prerequisites: (i) a qualified BPD, (ii) more active supravillage governments in performing substantial roles of village development, and (iii) the problem of VF disbursement delays being effectively addressed.⁷ If the principles of social accountability are consistently applied, supervisory practices that safeguard the needs of village communities will be strengthened both administratively and substantively. ■

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¹ Although this figure represents less than 1% of the total VF, misuse of funds still needs to be addressed to prevent escalation of the problem and ensure effectiveness of development outcomes.

² See Village Law article 82 and articles 112–115, and explanation of article 28g; Government Regulation No. 47/2015 articles 49 and 154; and Regulation of Minister for Home Affairs No. 114/2014 articles 84–86.

³ An *arisan* is a social gathering in which the participants operate a savings and loans mechanism.

⁴ A *yasinan* is an Islamic gathering to pray for the family or a neighbor who had died.

⁵ A *slapanan* is a Javanese community gathering per 35 days and usually held at *dusun* level.

⁶ *Kelompok Umat Basis* is a Catholic gathering among those who live in a neighborhood; activities may be different yet in general the group prays, discusses, and/or holds social activities.

⁷ See SMERU policy briefs on BPD, *Kecamatan*, and Disbursement of VF, respectively, at <http://smeru.or.id/id/report-types/briefs>.