



Empowering Voices through Community-Driven Child Protection in Soppeng Regency

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze community participation in implementing child protection in Soppeng Regency. This research uses qualitative research methods with descriptive research. Data collection techniques were carried out using interviews and documentation studies. Then the data was analyzed using the analysis method with data reduction techniques, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Furthermore, the location chosen by researchers was Soppeng Regency. The research results show that community participation in this program has run optimally based on the four dimensions participation (1) participation in decision making has gone well, this can be seen from the involvement of the community who participated in the planning and decision making process at socializations or meetings. (2) Participation in implementation, proven by active community activities in socializing child labor (3) Participation in benefit taking, can be seen from the follow-up carried out by PATBM cadres, namely by assessing children (4) Participation in evaluations, can be seen from their involvement during evaluations to determine the progress and obstacles experienced by PATBM cadres when carrying out child protection activities.

Keywords: *Policy; Community Participation; Child Protection*

Introduction

Children are a vulnerable group that is especially concerned by the state and society. This attention and concern appears in national and international law. Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection is a special regulation that regulates children's issues. The aim of child protection itself is stated in Article 3 of Law No. 23 of 2002. Child protection aims to guarantee the fulfillment of children's rights (Arliman 2017, Syafiuddin et al 2021, Nurjanah et al 2022, Saindya et al 2023) so that they can live, grow, develop and participate optimally in accordance with human dignity, as well as receive protection from violence and discrimination, for the sake of creating quality Indonesian children, with noble and prosperous character.

The more modern a country is, the greater its attention should be to creating conditions conducive to children's growth and development in the context of protection. The protection provided by the state to children covers various aspects of life (Ferguson 1997, Lachman 2002, Wulczyn 2010, Drozdova 2016), namely economic, social, cultural, political and legal aspects. Children should receive protection, love and supervision from their parents, be educated and cared for properly in accordance with their rights as

children so that deviations do not occur during their growth period. Currently, in fact, in several regions in this country, including Soppeng Regency, there are still many problems regarding exploitation of children, one form of which is child labor.

In fact, in the Child Protection Law, children are not permitted to work in order to help their family's economy. This means that even if the desire to work comes from the child, the Child Protection Law still does not allow children to work (Littlechild 2008, Ferguson 2017, Michael 2018, Sulistiyono 2019). The current phenomenon shows that children are used as beggars, buskers (Hasibuan 2020, Abdul 2020, Yusriani 2022, Arbie 2023), and the worst thing is that children are used as sexual commodities so that prostitution activities for girls are also increasingly widespread (Poulin 2003, Roby 2005, Orchard 2007, Williams 2012).

Activities to exploit children in any form for economic purposes are something that is not expected by existing laws and regulations. Children according to their age level should enjoy their childhood happily, and do not need to think about their family's economic condition, let alone help their family's economy. Several cases that have occurred prove that it is a fact that children are victims of exploitation by several individuals to gain economic gain.

Community participation is often discussed in various areas, both in urban and rural areas because we can see the huge influence of this participation, community participation really determines planning or programs around them, the success of a program without community participation will not run smoothly. Well, community participation will be really needed in planning or programs, so that the program runs properly. The planned programs are definitely closely related to community development. For this reason, the community is required to participate in development. In order for development to proceed as we hope, participation from the community is needed in carrying out these development activities. Community participation in implementing development programs requires community awareness of their interests and interests, the strategy implemented is an awareness strategy (Sanoff 1999, Shalowitz 2009, Van Cuong 2018). The role of the community in current development is not only as an object, but also as a subject of development. The principle of people-centered development emphasized that society must be the main actor in development

According to Cohen and Uphnoff (1977), participation is involvement in the process of making decisions, implementing programs, obtaining benefits and evaluating programs. According to Alexander Abe, direct community involvement will have four important impacts, namely: First, avoiding opportunities for manipulation of interests; Second, clarify what society really wants and needs; Third, adding value to the legitimacy of planning formulations, in this case the more community participation involved, the better; Fourth, increase community awareness and skills

Community participation in the child protection process is very necessary considering that the community can know the ins and outs of the state of their own environment, the community can recognize, examine and take the initiative in preventing and solving existing problems independently. The community referred to in this context is a community (group of people who interact with each other) who live in the smallest government administrative boundaries, namely the village/sub-district. Child protection and community empowerment are mandatory matters that must be carried out by the central government and regional governments (including district/city governments). This obligation is confirmed in Law Number 23 of 2014, articles 9 and 12. The government's obligations in carrying out child protection have also been regulated through Law Number 35 of 2014 article 22 which confirms that the state, government and regional governments [including district governments /city] is obliged and responsible for providing support for facilities, infrastructure and availability of human resources in the implementation of child protection. In implementing child protection, the government and district/city regional governments must pay attention to the obligations and responsibilities of the community to play a role in child protection as regulated in articles 25 and 72 of the law. Therefore, the government's strategy in empowering the community, which increases government partnerships with the community, is

very strategic in child protection. This strategy can accelerate the achievement of child protection targets to prevent and reduce the prevalence of violence against children.

Strengthening community participation is in line with the program formed by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection which established a program called Community-Based Integrated Child Protection (PATBM). PATBM is a movement of networks or groups of citizens at the community level who work in a coordinated manner to achieve child protection goals. PATBM is a community initiative as the spearhead for carrying out prevention efforts by building community awareness so that changes in understanding, attitudes and behavior occur that provide protection for children. As the spearhead, PATBM is part of the child protection system which is carried out based on applicable policies and regulations using the functions of existing or newly formed institutional structures at the local level in the village/sub-district (or below) which is networked with various child protection institutions and government in stages.

This program is expected to further increase community involvement and participation since planning and can increase their commitment to support the implementation of activities. When activities are formulated and mutually agreed upon among community representatives, a sense of ownership can emerge so that they are more responsible for realizing the activity plans. Strengthening community commitment and movements can encourage and strengthen the commitment of local governments.

Soppeng Regency is one of the districts in South Sulawesi province, which has a quite significant number of cases of child violence. This Community-Based Integrated Child Protection Program was launched to respond to cases of violence against children which are currently starting to occur in the community and to increase community involvement in child protection efforts. Based on data recorded at the Soppeng Regency Women and Children Protection UPT, during 2021 and 2022 there was an increase in cases of violence against children by 37.5%.

The establishment of the PATBM program is expected to be effective in preventing cases of child violence, especially in Soppeng Regency there are already around 54 PATBMs formed in all villages. From the increasing number of cases of child violence, community participation in child protection efforts can be expected to be effective when there are incidents of violence, residents can ensure that victims receive help quickly so that they obtain their right to receive repairs for the losses they have experienced, to restore the functional disorders they have experienced for the sake of continued growth and development, obtaining justice and a sense of security. Therefore, PATBM has great potential to suppress the development of incidents and even reduce the amount of violence against children, and reduce risks.

This research aims to analyze community participation in implementing child protection in Soppeng Regency. This research uses Cohen and Uphoff's (1977) Participation approach, namely: 1. Participation in Decision Making (participation in decision making) 2. Participation in Implementation (Participation in implementation) 3. Participation in Benefits (Participation in taking benefits) 4. Participation in Evaluation (Participation in evaluation)

Research Methods

This research uses qualitative research methods with descriptive research. Data collection techniques were carried out using interviews and documentation studies. The data was analyzed using the analysis method proposed by (Miles & Huberman 1994) with data reduction techniques, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Furthermore, the location chosen by researchers was Soppeng Regency. This research aims to analyze community participation in implementing child protection in Soppeng Regency. The informants in this research were the people of Soppeng Regency and the staff of the Soppeng Regency Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control and Family Planning Service. The focus of this research uses the Participation approach proposed by Cohen and

Uphoff (1977) distinguishing participation into four types, namely: 1. Participation in Decision Making (participation in decision making) 2. Participation in Implementation (Participation in implementation) 3. Participation in Benefits (Participation in taking benefits) 4. Participation in Evaluation (Participation in evaluation).

Results and Discussion

In the Soppeng Regency regional regulation Number 3 of 2020, it is stated that children must receive guarantees for the fulfillment and promotion of their rights, including protection from various forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect which are the responsibility of the Regional Government, community, business world and family. The regulation also clearly states that society must also be a pillar in child protection, not just the government or the business world. To look at the dimensions of community participation, use the Cohen and Uphoff (1977) approach, as follows:

Participation in Decision Making

This participation is mainly related to determining alternatives with the community regarding ideas or ideas that concern the common interest. Forms of participation in decision making include contributing ideas or thoughts, attendance at meetings, discussions and responses or rejection of programs offered. Planning is the initial process in the development stages. Community participation in planning and decision making is an important stage, how the community determines a development program for themselves, by knowing what the problems are and what the needs are based on their priority scale in their environment.

Community involvement in child protection in the decision-making process carried out by establishing a program called PATBM (Community-Based Integrated Child Protection) has been going well. This is proven by the involvement of PATBM cadres in the planning process by discussing with the community and using their ideas as material for discussions with related parties regarding child protection. Community-Based Integrated Child Protection (PATBM) is an empowerment program initiated by the KPPPA central government to strengthen community participation movements and government partnerships with the community in child protection. Community appreciation and involvement since planning can increase their commitment to support the implementation of activities. When activities are formulated and mutually agreed upon among community representatives, a sense of ownership can emerge so that they are more responsible for realizing the activity plans. Strengthening community commitment and movements can encourage and strengthen the commitment of local governments.

Participation in Implementation

Participation in implementation includes coordination activities and program elaboration. Participation in implementation is a continuation of plans that have been previously initiated, both related to planning, implementation and objectives. Community participation in implementation has gone well, this is proven by active community activities in socializing child labor. The capacity of every citizen, children and parents in preventing and responding to violence against children has been increased through structured intervention activities. in PATBM, such as through providing information, counseling, training, discussions, mentoring, providing consultations, exhibitions, etc. More than that, through community involvement in the entire series of PATBM activity processes starting from situation analysis, planning, implementation of activities, evaluation, as well as coordination, consultation and referral; The community is empowered so that they have the confidence and ability to prevent and solve children's problems independently. The PATBM activity process also empowers the community to contribute ideas that influence government decision making in improving the lives of children and the community. The involvement of save the children, as mentioned in the interview above, is an NGO or non-government

organization in accordance with its capacity, namely providing training to PATBM cadres related to child protection.

Participation in Taking Benefits

Participation in taking benefits cannot be separated from the implementation results that have been achieved both in relation to quality and quantity. In terms of quality, it can be seen from the output, while in terms of quantity it can be seen from the percentage of program success. This is a follow-up to the implementation in ensuring the smooth implementation of the program that has been planned in accordance with the goals and targets that have been set.

The follow-up carried out by PATBM cadres was to assess children, and children were found who were indicated to be child labourers. After the community's findings, in this case, PATBM cadres collaborated with Save the Children, they facilitated these children with appropriate tools. safer so that it doesn't endanger the child. The assessment process is a process of collecting and processing information to find out the child's needs, development, and what problems the child is facing, the results of which are then used as material for reflection and a basis for knowing the needs of children in the future, this is This means that the presence of the community as PATBM cadres provides benefits by taking the initiative in preventing and solving problems of children around them.

Participation in Evaluation

Participation in this evaluation is related to the implementation of previously planned programs. Participation in this evaluation aims to determine the achievements of previously planned programs. Community involvement in the evaluation process has gone well because all PATBM cadres will be evaluated on the extent of their development in carrying out child protection activities as well as the indicators used. Measured in this evaluation are the communication of PATBM cadres with village or sub-district officials regarding PATBM, the ability of PATBM cadres to network with other stakeholders to support the implementation of PATBM as well as the obstacles faced by cadres in implementing the PATBM program and strategies for responding to these various obstacles.

The Cohen and Uphoff (1977) framework provides a comprehensive model for community involvement in child protection In the Soppeng Regency, delineating three essential dimensions: decision making, implementation, and benefit-taking. Firstly, participation in decision making is crucial, where community members actively contribute to developing child protection strategies. This is exemplified by programs like PATBM, where community input in planning and decision processes instills a sense of responsibility and ownership over child protection initiatives. Secondly, effective participation extends into the implementation phase, with community members engaging in various activities such as socialization, training, and consultation. PATBM's success highlights the empowerment of community members in actively preventing and addressing child abuse and neglect, also influencing governmental policies for child welfare. Finally, participation in taking benefits involves the community in recognizing and responding to children's needs, especially those at risk like child laborers. The role of organizations like Save the Children in training PATBM cadres underscores the effectiveness of collaborative efforts between NGOs and community groups, further enhancing the model's effectiveness in child protection.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this research based on the Participation dimensional approach in implementing child protection in Soppeng Regency shows that community participation in this program has run optimally based on the four dimensions proposed by Cohen and Uphoff (1977) , namely: (1) participation in decision making has gone well. This can be seen from the involvement of the community who participate in the planning and decision-making process at socializations or meetings. (2) Participation in

Implementation, this is proven by active community activities in socializing child labor (3) Participation in Benefit Taking, this can be seen from the follow-up carried out by PATBM cadres, namely by conducting assessments on children (4) Participation in This evaluation can be seen from their involvement during evaluations to determine the progress and obstacles experienced by PATBM cadres when carrying out child protection activities.

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