

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF VILLAGE FUND BASED (CASH FOR WORK) PROGRAMS IN RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT (A STUDY OF NOELBAKI AND MATA AIR VILLAGES IN KUPANG TENGAH SUBDISTRICT)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the Cash for Work program in infrastructure development in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village, as well as to identify the obstacles encountered during its implementation. The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach using the effectiveness measurement framework of Lubis and Huseini, which consists of the resource, process, and target approaches. Data were analyzed using NVivo 12 software. The results show that the implementation of the Cash for Work program in infrastructure development in Noelbaki Village is considered effective in terms of resources, process, and targets. This is reflected in the availability of funding sources, local labor, and adequate facilities and infrastructure, the implementation in accordance with the principles of the Cash for Work program, and the achievement of program objectives. Meanwhile, Mata Air Village is categorized as moderately effective. From the resource perspective, the availability of facilities and infrastructure is still inadequate, and from the process perspective, the self-managed (swakelola) principle has not been optimally implemented. The main obstacles identified in both Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village include land acquisition issues from the community and delays in the distribution of materials to infrastructure development sites.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Cash for Work, Infrastructure Development

I. INTRODUCTION

Through various strategic policies, the Indonesian government is striving to achieve national development that is more equitable, inclusive, and just. One of the priorities of national development is to reduce disparities between urban and rural areas. This equitable development is aimed at strengthening the self-reliance of villages as the smallest units of government, which hold great potential for supporting national economic growth. The development process must be ongoing, as levels of prosperity and well-being are relative and can never be fully achieved. Village-oriented development is expected to accelerate improvements in well-being and foster new economic hubs in rural areas.

As a follow-up to efforts to strengthen village development, the government enacted Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages, which was subsequently reinforced by Government Regulation No. 60 of 2014 on Village Funds sourced from the State Budget (APBN). Through this policy in 2015, the government distributed village funds to 74,093 villages throughout Indonesia. Village Funds are funds allocated for villages sourced from the State Budget (APBN), transferred to the Regional Treasury Account via the State General Treasury Account after being recorded in the Regional General Treasury Account, and used to finance government affairs—including development activities, community development, and the empowerment of village communities (Risa et al., 2021).

Government Regulation No. 60 of 2014 on Village Funds Derived from the State Budget stipulates that village funds must be managed in an orderly manner, in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and in an efficient, economical, effective, transparent,

and accountable manner, while taking into account fairness and compliance and prioritizing the interests of the local community (Nurbaiti et al., 2022). This provision indicates that village funds disbursed by the central government not only emphasize administrative aspects but also prioritize the goal of community welfare through various strategic programs, thereby providing tangible benefits to the community. Funds managed optimally will support the success of village development in economic, social, and infrastructure terms and make a significant contribution to the country's overall growth and progress (Wicaksono et al., 2020). In addition to supporting efforts to address extreme poverty, food security programs, the development of village potential, and the provision of basic health services—as outlined in Regulation of the Minister of Villages and Disadvantaged Regions No. 2 of 2024 on Operational Guidelines for the Focused Use of Village Funds in 2025—village funds are also focused on village development through cash-for-work programs.

The Cash-for-Work Program is a community empowerment initiative funded by village funds, specifically targeting poor and marginalized communities through various development activities that have been implemented since 2018. The Cash-for-Work Program emphasizes the involvement of local labor by providing daily or weekly cash wages to the poor, the unemployed, and the underemployed. Cash-for-Work is implemented through self-management by empowering village communities in productive ways, prioritizing the utilization of local resources, labor, and technology to provide additional income, reduce poverty, and improve the welfare of the people, as stipulated in Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration No. 8 of 2022 on Priorities for the Use of Village Funds in 2023.

The Cash-for-Work Program is not merely a village-funded initiative involving local communities that every village is required to implement; it must also prioritize the effectiveness of its implementation. Effectiveness is one of the most important factors in determining the success of a program. Effectiveness relates to the ability to provide services to the community, which is the target of a program's implementation. Effectiveness requires agreement on the initial objectives established through a deliberative process, as well as implementation that aligns with the established plan. The effectiveness of a program implemented by the village government depends on the extent to which the program's planning, implementation, and monitoring are carried out appropriately and in a coordinated manner. Therefore, to enhance the effectiveness of the Cash-for-Work Program, the village government must ensure clear planning, effective coordination among community members, and ongoing evaluation. The effectiveness of the Cash-for-Work Program can be seen in the absorption of a large workforce through the direct payment of wages in cash, whether on a daily or weekly basis, the implementation of village infrastructure development, increased community income, and the improvement of the village economy (Putri & Lukman, 2024). Before the implementation of the Cash-for-Work program, village development projects were carried out entirely by contractors without involving community participation, particularly from vulnerable groups such as the poor, the unemployed, the underemployed, and families affected by stunting. However, after the Cash-for-Work program was implemented, development activities were carried out through self-management by the village government by utilizing local labor and prioritizing the involvement of the poor, the unemployed, and the underemployed (Ayupuspita, 2022). This shift in implementation mechanisms indicates a change in the village development model toward participatory and inclusive principles that encourage the community to play an active role in the direction and success of the program. Lubis et al. (2020) argue that the objectives of the Cash-for-Work

program are infrastructure development and the improvement of the rural economy.

Central Kupang is one of the subdistricts within the administrative area of Kupang Regency, consisting of 7 villages and 1 urban village. Of the seven villages in Kupang Tengah Subdistrict, Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village are the two that received relatively large village fund allocations from 2023 to 2025 and are actively implementing the Cash-for-Work program, which focuses on improving community accessibility and enhancing agricultural infrastructure. Although the Cash-for-Work program has been implemented and has contributed to job creation and the provision of village infrastructure, its implementation still faces various challenges, including inadequate infrastructure quality—such as numerous damaged farm roads and neighborhood roads, non-permanent irrigation channels, and the continued use of makeshift toilets and uninhabitable housing by some residents.

In addition to issues regarding the quality of infrastructure, the implementation of the Cash-for-Work program in these two villages has also faced problems in terms of program execution, specifically regarding inconsistencies in the wage payment mechanisms for community members involved as laborers in infrastructure construction projects—in this case, farmers and laborers. Wages that should be paid on a daily or weekly basis to workers carrying out infrastructure development projects are often not paid by the implementing party until after the project has been completed, and there are even delays of one to two weeks. This results in low purchasing power among the community, making it difficult for them to meet their daily needs.

Several issues faced by Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village indicate a gap between the objectives of the Cash-for-Work program and its actual implementation. The Cash-for-Work program, which is intended to serve as a vehicle for empowering rural communities through various village development activities by involving local residents to improve their well-being, has not yet been fully optimized. This reality not only impacts the decline in local community participation and the effectiveness of infrastructure development but also poses a risk of inefficient utilization of village funds. Given these conditions, a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of the Cash-for-Work Program in infrastructure development in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village is necessary to determine the extent to which the program has been effectively implemented, as well as the obstacles encountered in its implementation.

Research on the effectiveness of the Cash-for-Work program has been conducted previously by earlier researchers. A study by Feri (2024), titled “The Effectiveness of Labor-Intensive Programs in Infrastructure Development in Ulubalang Village, Bone Regency,” examined the program from the perspectives of resources, processes, and outcomes. The results indicate that the Labor-Intensive Program in Ulubalang Village significantly boosted the local economy and improved community access to infrastructure such as roads and bridges.

Natalia & Sukmana (2025), titled “The Effectiveness of the Village Cash-for-Work Program in Community Empowerment in Dukuhsari Village, Sidoarjo Regency.” The research findings indicate that the Village Cash-for-Work Program in Dukuhsari Village has not been fully effective. As evidenced by indicators of target accuracy, program objectives, and monitoring and evaluation, the program has not been fully effective. This is due to the absence of an initial verification system to ensure that program recipients are truly eligible. The program’s long-term objectives have not been fully realized, and there is a greater emphasis on technical and administrative aspects rather than a comprehensive evaluation of the program’s success. Meanwhile, program outreach has been effective, as evidenced by

the absence of violations during implementation.

The villages of Noelbaki and Mata Air were selected as research sites because both villages are actively implementing the Cash-for-Work program, particularly in infrastructure development with a focus on improving accessibility and agricultural infrastructure. Additionally, these are two villages that have received relatively large amounts of village funds between 2023 and 2025; yet they face challenges regarding infrastructure quality and the inaccuracy of wage disbursement mechanisms for community members serving as laborers, necessitating a further assessment of how effectively the Cash-for-Work program has been implemented in these two villages. By focusing on the micro-level context in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village, the research findings are expected to provide tangible contributions to village governments and communities in improving the quality of the implementation of the Cash-for-Work program in infrastructure development at the village level, while also formulating appropriate strategies to achieve more optimal and sustainable village development through the Cash-for-Work program.

Based on the background described above, the author is interested in conducting a study titled “The Effectiveness of the Village Fund-Based Cash-for-Work Program in Rural Infrastructure Development (A Study of Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village in Kupang Tengah Subdistrict).”

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative research. Qualitative research employs procedures capable of generating descriptive data, whether in written or oral form. The choice of a qualitative method in this study is based on the consideration that qualitative research allows the researcher to describe and explore in depth how the Cash-for-Work program has been effectively implemented in infrastructure development in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village. In this study, the researcher used data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and documentation to obtain accurate information in accordance with the research needs. In this study, the data analysis method used the Creswell data analysis model with the assistance of NVivo 12.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Effectiveness of the Cash-for-Work Program in Infrastructure Development in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village

The Cash-for-Work Program is a government initiative funded by village funds aimed at empowering communities, particularly the poor and marginalized, by prioritizing the use of local resources, labor, and technology in various village development activities to increase income, improve community welfare, and accelerate infrastructure development at the village level. In its implementation, the program’s effectiveness must be assessed to determine the extent to which it has provided tangible benefits to the community at the village level. Additionally, evaluating the effectiveness of the Cash-for-Work Program serves as a basis for consideration and evaluation by village governments when designing future programs, thereby preventing any overlap between program objectives and their actual implementation.

This study discusses the analysis of field data based on actual findings, which are linked to Lubis and Huseini’s framework for measuring effectiveness—examined through the resource, process, and outcome approaches—and outlines the challenges encountered in implementing the Cash-for-Work program in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village.

a. Resource Approach

According to Lubis and Huseini (2021), the resource-based approach focuses on an organization’s success in obtaining various inputs—both physical and non-physical—that align with the organization’s needs. Lubis and Huseini emphasize that a program achieves effectiveness when supported by the availability of adequate inputs.

Research findings indicate that the funding for the implementation of the Cash-for-Work program in infrastructure development from 2023 to 2025 will come from the Village Fund.

Table 1: Budget Breakdown and Actual Expenditures for the Implementation of Development Projects in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village for the Years 2023–2025

Village	Yaer	Type of Activity	Budget (IDR)	Actual (IDR)	Source Funds
Noelbaki	2023	Construction of a Concrete Paved Road	33,706,000	33,706,000	DDS
		- Construction of a Farm Access Road for the Sago Industry	233,108,500	233,108,500	
		- Construction of a Gravel Road	41,029,000	41,029,000	
	2024	- Construction of Drainage Channels	132,204,750	132,204,750	DDS
		- Construction of Farm Access Roads A & B	287,892,000	287,892,000	
		- Construction of Gravel Roads	40,264,754	40,264,754	
		- Construction of Concrete Pavement Roads	133,706,000	133,706,000	
		- River Regulation of the Noelbaki River	64,375,000	64,375,000	
	2025	- Construction of the Sirtu Road	112,998,000	112,998,000	DDS
		- Kuanoah Drainage Channel	85,872,500	85,872,500	
Total			1,180,845,879	1,180,845,879	
	2023	- Construction of Farm Roads	147,469,000	147,469,000	DDS
		- Construction of Irrigation Channels	76,269,000	76,269,000	
		- Opening of New Roads	57,570,000	57,570,000	
		- Construction of	113,000,000	113,000,000	

Spring	2024	Concrete-Paved Roads	40,925,000	40,925,000	DDS
		- Construction of Farm Access Roads	86,000,000	86,000,000	
	2025	- Irrigation Projects	188,925,760	188,925,760	DDS
		- Road Paving	203,118,400	203,118,400	
Total			913,277,160	913,277,160	

Source: Noelbaki Village Administration and Mata Air Village Administration, 2026

Table 1 shows that from 2023 to 2025, Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village carried out labor-intensive cash-for-work infrastructure projects, such as the construction of concrete-paved roads, farm access roads, gravel roads, drainage channels, and river normalization, funded by village funds. In terms of availability, Village Funds—as the primary source of financing for the implementation of the Cash-for-Work program—were sufficient to fund various infrastructure development activities, as evidenced by the budget allocation aligning with the actual infrastructure construction carried out. The adequate availability of Village Funds enabled the village government to effectively implement community-based development programs.

These findings are also supported by an analysis conducted using NVivo 12 software, which revealed that terms such as “Village Fund” and “development” dominated the informants’ conversations, indicating that the Village Fund served as the primary source of funding—with sufficient availability—to support the implementation of the Cash-for-Work program in the construction of various infrastructure projects in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village.

In terms of labor, research findings indicate that Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village have a sufficient supply of labor within the villages, including both skilled workers and unskilled laborers who can be utilized to support the implementation of the Cash-for-Work program. The Project Implementation Unit (TPK) stated that they have never brought in labor from outside the villages for infrastructure development activities, as the local supply is sufficient. One reason for the abundant labor supply in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village is that the majority of residents work as farmers; once the harvest season ends, these farmers often participate as laborers in infrastructure development projects organized by the village to supplement their daily income. Consequently, the village government faces no difficulty in recruiting labor, as many local residents are eager to participate in the Cash-for-Work program.

The results of the analysis using NVivo 12 software reinforce these findings; the high frequency of words such as “labor” and “plenty” indicates that there is a sufficient labor supply in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village, so that no laborers need to be brought in from outside the villages for infrastructure development projects.

In terms of facilities and infrastructure, research findings indicate that Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village differ in their ability to support the implementation of the Cash-for-Work program. Noelbaki Village has relatively adequate local facilities and infrastructure, with most construction materials—such as white clay, cement, and work tools—available within the village. One factor contributing to the availability of local

infrastructure is that Noelbaki Village is supported by the presence of a quarry and community-owned building supply stores, which facilitate the procurement process and support the smooth progress of construction, although under certain conditions, materials such as sand are still sourced from outside the village due to quality considerations. Conversely, Mata Air Village, although it has a sufficiently adequate supply of construction tools, remains heavily reliant on external supplies for building materials due to limited local resources—such as the absence of a quarry site and a building materials store within the village—resulting in materials frequently being sourced from outside the village during the procurement process for infrastructure construction activities. This situation indicates that Mata Air Village is not yet fully self-sufficient in providing facilities and infrastructure for Cash-for-Work-based infrastructure development.

The results of the analysis using NVivo 12 software reinforce these findings, as evidenced by the high frequency of words such as “available,” “facilities and infrastructure,” “outside the village,” and “building materials,” indicating that Noelbaki Village is supported by adequate supplies of facilities and infrastructure within the village, whereas Mata Air Village still faces supply limitations, resulting in a complete reliance on building materials from outside the village.

Based on Lubis and Huseini’s effectiveness assessment using the resource-based approach, the Cash-for-Work program in Noelbaki Village was categorized as effective, as evidenced by the availability of adequate inputs, while Mata Air Village is considered ineffective based on the availability of adequate funds and labor, yet it faces limitations in local infrastructure and facilities as supporting inputs for implementing Cash-for-Work-based infrastructure development.

This finding is supported by research conducted by Jazuli (2021), which explains that the availability of adequate work infrastructure and facilities plays a crucial role in supporting the implementation of infrastructure development.

b. *process approach*

Based on Lubis and Huseini’s (2021) concept of effectiveness measurement, the process approach refers to the internal processes within an organization in implementing a program. The process approach is used to understand the overall flow of program implementation in accordance with established guidelines.

From a planning perspective, the research findings indicate that the planning of the Cash-for-Work program for infrastructure development in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village was preceded by development planning meetings involving the Village Council (BPD), village officials, the project implementation team, traditional leaders, community cadres, and people with disabilities. In these deliberative forums, the community was given the opportunity to voice their aspirations and offer ideas regarding all matters related to the development projects to be implemented. The planning deliberations began with hamlet-level meetings (*musdus*), where residents of each hamlet were empowered to hold small meetings to discuss the development needs that were most urgent and should be prioritized. Following the hamlet meeting, a village meeting (*musdes*) is held, where all matters discussed at the hamlet meeting are brought to the village meeting for discussion with village officials. In addition to discussing infrastructure development, the village meeting also empowers community members involved as laborers to voice their opinions regarding wage determination for infrastructure development projects. Once all community proposals are approved by the village government, taking budget availability into account, The results of the agreement regarding the types of development activities to be carried out

are then incorporated into the Village Budget (APBDes), followed by the preparation of a Cost Estimate (RAB). The planning process carried out by both villages is in accordance with Law No. 32 of 2004, which stipulates that development planning must be bottom-up in nature, involving all segments of the community.

These findings are also supported by an analysis conducted using NVivo 12 software, which revealed that the terms “consultation” and “community” indicate that all development projects implemented by Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village were the result of collective decisions made starting from the grassroots level, ensuring that the projects carried out were grounded in the community’s needs.

In terms of implementation, the Cash-for-Work program in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village is based on Regulation of the Minister of Villages and Disadvantaged Regions No. 2 of 2024 concerning Operational Guidelines on the Focus of Village Fund Use, which stipulates that the implementation of the Cash-for-Work program must adhere to the principles of inclusivity, participation, self-reliance, and self-management. The research results show that in every implementation of village government infrastructure development activities, efforts are made to involve the local community as development actors by engaging them as laborers in physical construction activities. The activity implementation team and several community workers stated that the people involved as laborers are groups of people who, by and large, do not have permanent jobs, such as farmers and laborers.

This indicates that the village governments of Noelbaki and Mata Air have prioritized vulnerable communities as the primary beneficiaries of program implementation. Furthermore, in the implementation of infrastructure development based on village policies through the TPK, the use of human labor is maximized over the use of heavy machinery to strengthen local community participation and empowerment efforts. Efforts were made to source building materials from within the village, as supported by adequate supplies. However, Mata Air Village still relied on sources outside the village for the procurement of building materials, meaning that the principle of self-management had not yet been effectively implemented. The implementation approach of the village governments of Noelbaki and Mata Air is in line with Regulation of the Minister of Villages and Disadvantaged Regions No. 2 of 2024.

These findings are also supported by an analysis conducted using NVivo 12 software, in which terms such as “labor force,” “farmers,” “local,” and “outsiders” confirm that local resources are being optimally utilized and that vulnerable communities are a top priority as the labor force in the implementation of infrastructure development activities in Noelbaki Village; however, Mata Air Village has not yet fully utilized local resources.

In terms of wage payments to workers, the research findings show that the village governments of Noelbaki and Mata Air implement a mechanism for paying workers in cash after infrastructure construction activities are completed, in accordance with the collectively agreed-upon HOK. However, this mechanism is the result of an agreement between the TPK and the workers. Based on statements from the TPK and workers in both villages, it is possible that wage payments are adjusted to meet the workers’ needs. Wages may be paid earlier—either once a week or every two weeks—depending on the workers’ needs to meet household expenses. This indicates that the governments of Noelbaki and Mata Air villages have a strong commitment to ensuring that the benefits of the program are tangibly felt by the workers, particularly in meeting short-term economic needs in a timely manner. The results of data analysis using Nvivo 12 software reinforce these findings, with

the dominant occurrence of the words “completed,” “work,” and “appropriate” reflecting that the wage payment mechanism implemented by the village governments is oriented toward the economic needs of the working community.

From a process-oriented perspective, the Cash-for-Work program for infrastructure development in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village demonstrates implementation in accordance with established regulations, as reflected in participatory planning, inclusive implementation, self-help and self-management—although Mata Air Village has not yet been fully effective—as well as wage payment mechanisms that meet workers’ needs. It can therefore be concluded that, from a process-oriented perspective, the Cash-for-Work program in Noelbaki Village is categorized as effective, while Mata Air Village is still categorized as moderately effective.

This finding aligns with research conducted by Jazuli (2021), which indicates that village governments adhere to applicable laws and regulations in the implementation of the Cash-for-Work program.

c. goal approach

Based on Lubis and Huseini’s (2021) definition of effectiveness, the goal-oriented approach focuses on the implementation of a program by assessing the extent to which previously formulated objectives or goals have been achieved. If a program is implemented in accordance with its established goals, it can be considered effective.

The research findings indicate that during the 2023–2025 period, Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village have planned and implemented Cash-for-Work infrastructure projects as outlined in their Village Development Plans (RKPDes). In 2023, Noelbaki Village implemented 3 infrastructure projects, while Mata Air Village implemented 2. In 2024, this increased to 5 projects in Noelbaki Village and 4 projects in Mata Air Village, while in 2025, both villages each implemented 2 infrastructure development projects.

Table 2: Actual Data on Infrastructure Development in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village for 2023–2025

Village	Year	Activity Category	Activity Type	Status
Noelbaki	2023	Village Development Implementati on Division	Construction of a Concrete Paved Road	Terealisasi
			Construction of a Gravel Road	
			Construction of a Farm Access Road for the Sagu Project	
	2024		Construction of Farm Access Roads for Hamlet A and Hamlet B	Realized
			Construction of a Gravel Road	
			Construction of a Concrete Paved Road	

			Construction of a Drainage Channel	
			River Regulation of the Noelbaki River	
	2025		Construction of the Koanoah Drainage Channel	Realized
			Construction of a Gravel Road	
Spring	2023	Village Development Implementation Division	Construction of Farm Roads	Realized
			Construction of Irrigation Channels	
	2024		Construction of Farm Roads	Realized
			Construction of Concrete-Paved Roads	
			Construction of New Roads	
			Irrigation Construction	
	2025		Road Paving	Realized
Construction of Concrete-Paved Roads				

Source: Noelbaki Village Administration and Mata Air Village Administration, 2026

Table 2 shows that from 2023 to 2025, Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village consistently carried out infrastructure development projects focused on improving community access and supporting agricultural activities. The implementation of 10 infrastructure projects in Noelbaki Village and 8 in Mata Air Village from 2023 to 2025 indicates that the Cash-for-Work program has successfully improved infrastructure in both villages. This finding is reinforced by an analysis using Nvivo 12 software, where the occurrence of the words “every year,” “farming,” “concrete pavement,” and “irrigation” reflects that Cash-for-Work-based infrastructure development is carried out sustainably with a focus on the agricultural sector, particularly through the construction of farm roads and concrete pavements.

In terms of improved accessibility, the research findings indicate that the Cash-for-Work infrastructure projects have provided significant benefits to the communities of Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village, both in terms of ease of access and community mobility. According to residents in both villages, the construction of farm roads using local labor has enabled farmers to easily transport their harvests, as vehicles can now directly access the rice fields. Concrete-paved roads, which were a priority in the development, also greatly facilitate the community’s smooth entry and exit from the village area. In addition to the benefits in terms of ease of access, the Cash-for-Work program in infrastructure development also provides economic benefits, as it reduces production costs for farmers; with the farm roads in place, farmers no longer need to pay for transportation labor to carry their harvests. Data analysis results using Nvivo 12 software reinforce these findings, where the words “access,”

“facilitate,” and “outcome” indicate that the Cash-for-Work program not only has a positive economic impact but also significantly contributes to the ease of conducting economic and social activities within the community.

In terms of income, the study findings show that community members employed in the Cash-for-Work program in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village received additional income when working on Cash-for-Work-based infrastructure projects. Over a work period of 1–3 weeks, workers in Noelbaki Village could earn wages ranging from Rp700,000 to over Rp2,000,000—significantly higher than their pre-program income, which averaged only Rp600,000 to Rp750,000 from daily farm labor. Meanwhile, workers in Mata Air Village can earn wages ranging from Rp600,000 to Rp2,000,000 over a 2–3 week work period—significantly higher than before they were involved in infrastructure development, when they received an average of Rp450,000 to Rp500,000 per month from daily farm labor and the sale of garden produce, namely water spinach.

According to workers, this program is very helpful to the community, especially after the harvest season ends. For most people, their primary income depends solely on crop yields, as the majority of workers are rice and vegetable farmers. This seasonal income pattern makes it difficult for them to meet their daily needs. Through the Cash-for-Work program, they gain a direct source of income over a short period, allowing them to meet their daily needs. This finding is reinforced by the results of data analysis using Nvivo 12 software, where the words “money,” “income,” and “increase” dominating informants’ conversations, indicating that the Cash-for-Work program not only provides employment opportunities but also empowers the community through income generated from their participation as laborers, which has a tangible impact on increasing their total income.

From a target-oriented perspective, the Cash-for-Work program in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village has successfully achieved its established objectives, namely improvements in village infrastructure, increased community accessibility, and higher incomes for community members employed as workers. Thus, it can be concluded that, based on a target-oriented approach, the Cash-for-Work program in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village is categorized as effective.

The results of this study are consistent with those of a study conducted by Feri (2024), which showed that the implementation of the Cash-for-Work program has had a positive impact on increasing the income of workers and providing infrastructure for village communities.

Challenges in Implementing Cash-for-Work Programs for Infrastructure Development in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village

The Cash-for-Work Program implemented in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village was designed to empower the community through various infrastructure development activities at the village level. However, its implementation has faced various obstacles, stemming not only from technical challenges but also from administrative hurdles.

1. Community Land Acquisition

One of the main challenges faced by Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village in implementing the Cash-for-Work program for infrastructure development is the lack of landowners willing to provide land for infrastructure projects such as farm roads and irrigation systems. This situation is compounded by the fact that most infrastructure construction sites overlap with agricultural areas, leading residents to feel they would suffer a loss if they had to sacrifice their rice fields for farm roads and irrigation systems. This has resulted in prolonged site selection processes, causing delays in the implementation of construction activities.

2. Delays in Material Distribution

Technical challenges have posed a significant obstacle to the implementation of the Cash-for-Work program for infrastructure development in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village. Construction materials were frequently in short supply during the project, necessitating reordering; however, the vehicles transporting the materials were not on time in delivering them to the project site. This situation resulted in the work being temporarily halted until the materials were available again at the construction site.

These findings were corroborated by data analysis using NVivo 12 software, with the frequent occurrence of words such as “obstacles,” “land acquisition,” and “delays” indicating that the main obstacles to the implementation of the Cash-for-Work program in infrastructure development in Noelbaki Village were administrative and technical in nature.

From the perspective of effectiveness measurement as defined by Lubis and Huseini (2021), obstacles to land acquisition and delays in material distribution point to a process-oriented approach, which emphasizes that effectiveness is measured not only by output achievements but also by the quality and smoothness of program implementation stages, from planning to coordination among stakeholders. These issues indicate that the planning process, particularly during the site selection phase, has not been carried out comprehensively, as evidenced by the insufficient negotiation and agreement processes with landowners and weak coordination with material suppliers, resulting in the inefficient completion of infrastructure construction in terms of time.

From a regulatory perspective, under Ministerial Regulation No. 2 of 2024 on Villages and Underdeveloped Regions, village governments should be able to maximize the application of participatory principles in infrastructure development planning by strengthening coordination among community members. This includes structured communication mechanisms, capacity building for village officials to facilitate participation, and ongoing evaluation of community engagement levels. Without such strengthening, obstacles are likely to arise, such as difficulties in land acquisition and delays in the distribution of materials.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study on the effectiveness of the Cash-for-Work Program in infrastructure development in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village, the researchers conclude that:

1. The implementation of the Cash-for-Work program in infrastructure development in Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village demonstrated varying levels of effectiveness when examined from the perspectives of resources, processes, and outcomes. Noelbaki Village is considered effective because it is supported by the availability of funds, local facilities and infrastructure, local labor, an implementation process oriented toward the principles of inclusivity, participation, self-management, self-reliance, and compliance with mechanisms, as well as the achievement of program objectives. Meanwhile, Mata Air Village is categorized as moderately effective because, although it has sufficient funding sources, a supply of local labor, and an implementation process that is participatory and inclusive, and the program’s objectives have been achieved, the availability of local infrastructure and facilities is inadequate—as assessed from the resource-based approach—which has prevented the optimal implementation of self-management.

2. The main challenges faced by Noelbaki Village and Mata Air Village in implementing the Cash-for-Work program include administrative and technical obstacles, particularly regarding the acquisition of community land and delays in the distribution of building materials, which have resulted in the infrastructure construction process being less efficient in terms of project completion time.

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