

# Transforming Village Governance: The Impact of Village Development Boards on Community Participation, Indonesian Case Study

Ihyauddin Rosyadi<sup>1\*</sup>, Bambang Tri Sasongko Adi<sup>2</sup>, Oman Sukmana<sup>3</sup>, Vina Salviana<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Sociology, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Malang, Indonesia

<sup>3,4</sup>Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Malang, Indonesia

**Abstract:** This article examines the transformative potential of Village Development Boards (VDBs) in improving governance and enhancing community participation in Indonesian villages. Through case studies, it reveals that effective VDBs foster transparent and accountable governance structures, promoting greater community involvement in decision-making processes. However, challenges such as weak institutional capacity, inadequate understanding of roles, corruption, and limited resources hinder their full potential. Notable examples include institutional weaknesses in Desa Golo Manting and Desa Panasen, and corruption issues in Desa Karanganyar, contrasting with the more effective participatory governance in Desa Mekarharja. Future research should focus on enhancing VDB effectiveness through advanced training, capacity-building, and technological innovations. The findings suggest that VDBs, strengthened by robust legal frameworks and inclusive practices, can significantly contribute to sustainable and equitable rural development, turning villages into active development participants. This underscores the importance of evolving and refining VDBs to realize national development goals from the grassroots level.

**Keywords:** village development board, community participation, effectiveness, comparative, case study.

## 1. Introduction

### A. Background

Since the implementation of the decentralization system in the Indonesian government, there have been significant positive impacts on the functioning of governance at all levels, including village governance. This system has empowered local governments, allowing for more effective and responsive management of community affairs. The role of Village Government has become increasingly significant to the community, enabling the optimal management of villages. Historically, villages have had a strategic role as the smallest locus of development; in other words, national development begins at the village level. Even before Indonesia's independence, villages existed and have always been a focal point in the nation's development. Discussing villages is inherently interesting and inexhaustible in topics, ranging from the community, regional development, to the traditions embedded within these villages.

Village governance, consisting of the Village Government—namely the Village Head and his staff—and the Village Consultative Body (BPD), plays a crucial role in administering village affairs to achieve self-sufficiency, justice, and prosperity. As the closest government institution to the community, the legal status and position of village governance have always been subjects of debate, especially among political elites. The effectiveness of village governance is critical to ensuring that local development initiatives are inclusive and beneficial to all residents.

The implementation of Law No. 32 of 2004, followed by Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages [1], has implications not only for the changes in the hierarchical relationship between villages and the supra-village government but also for the power relations among political forces at the village level. On the other hand, concerning the power relations within village governance between the Village Head and the BPD, there should ideally be harmonious cooperation in implementing village development. However, disharmony and suboptimal performance of each role sometimes occur. In this context, the role of the Village Consultative Body (BPD) is particularly critical. The BPD is designed to be a democratic institution that facilitates community participation and oversight in village governance. However, it is often perceived as less than optimal in executing its roles and duties. This perception arises from various challenges, including lack of capacity, inadequate resources, and socio-political dynamics that hinder effective participation and governance.

### B. Problem Statement

Despite the strategic importance of villages in national development and the decentralization reforms intended to enhance local governance, the Village Consultative Body (BPD) often struggles to perform its mandated roles effectively. This situation results in suboptimal governance outcomes and limited community participation, which undermines the potential for achieving self-sufficient, just, and prosperous villages.

\*Corresponding author: kirimkeihya@gmail.com

### C. Objective of the Article

This article aims to investigate the transformative potential of Village Development Boards (VDBs) in enhancing village governance and promoting community involvement. It will examine the roles, challenges, and impacts of VDBs to offer insights into their effectiveness in rural development and empowerment. Specifically, the article will analyze the structure and functions of VDBs within Indonesian village governance, assess how VDBs engage community members and promote inclusive participation, evaluate their impact on local governance, accountability, and social cohesion, and identify challenges while proposing strategies for improvement. Additionally, it will provide policy recommendations to bolster VDBs' role in achieving sustainable and inclusive village development. Through these objectives, the article seeks to underscore the essential role of VDBs in transforming governance from the grassroots level and fostering a more participatory and empowered rural society.

## 2. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach, utilizing literature case studies [18]-[21] to explore and compare the effectiveness of Village Development Boards (VDBs) at the village level. The methodology involves a detailed comparative analysis of existing research and case studies [23] from various Indonesian villages. By examining the documented experiences, challenges, and successes of VDBs in different contexts, the study identifies patterns and factors that contribute to their effectiveness or inefficacy.

The primary data sources include academic articles, government reports, and research papers [24] focusing on VDBs' roles in village governance and community participation. Through a comparative analysis, the study assesses the institutional capacities, governance structures, community engagement practices [22], and specific challenges faced by VDBs in different villages. The effectiveness of VDBs is evaluated based on their ability to enhance transparency, accountability, and community involvement in village development processes.

By synthesizing findings from diverse case studies, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of the conditions under which VDBs thrive and the obstacles they encounter. This methodological approach allows for a nuanced analysis of VDB performance and offers insights into best practices and potential areas for policy intervention and improvement.

## 3. Theoretical Framework

### A. Participatory Democracy Theory

Participatory democracy is a model of democracy where citizens have the power to make decisions directly, rather than solely through elected representatives [35]. This theory emphasizes the importance of direct involvement and active engagement of individuals in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. Key principles of participatory democracy include direct participation, where citizens are involved in

decision-making processes rather than delegating authority to representatives; deliberation, which encourages open discussion and debate to reach consensus and informed decisions [31]; inclusion, ensuring that all community members, including marginalized groups, have the opportunity to participate; transparency, making decision-making processes open and transparent, allowing citizens to understand and influence outcomes [36]; and accountability, where those in power are held accountable to the people they serve through continuous engagement and feedback mechanisms.

Village Development Boards (VDBs) embody these principles by creating platforms for villagers to engage directly in governance and development initiatives. VDBs facilitate community involvement in planning, decision-making, and implementing local development projects, ensuring that the needs and preferences of the community are addressed. The relevance of participatory democracy to VDBs in the Indonesian context can be seen in several aspects. VDBs empower villagers by giving them a voice in governance, enhancing their ability to influence decisions that impact their lives. They ensure that local governance is responsive to the unique needs and priorities of the community through participatory processes. Additionally, regular engagement between VDBs and villagers promotes accountability and trust in local governance structures, and involving diverse community members helps build social cohesion and collective responsibility for local development [1].

Carole Pateman, one of the most influential theorists in participatory democracy, provides a critical framework for understanding the role of VDBs. Her seminal work, "Participation and Democratic Theory" (1970), explores the importance of participation in democratic systems and its transformative potential for individuals and societies [25]. Pateman argues that participatory democracy leads to more informed and engaged citizens, stronger communities, and more effective governance [25]. Her theories are particularly relevant to village governance in Indonesia, where the decentralized governance framework provided by Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages mandates community involvement in development processes.

Pateman's idea that participation fosters empowerment is evident in how VDBs enable villagers to take active roles in decision-making and governance. In line with her theory, the involvement of villagers in VDBs deepens democracy by making governance more inclusive and representative of local needs. Furthermore, Pateman emphasizes that participation builds individual capacities [26], which is reflected in Indonesian villages where VDBs often engage in training and capacity-building activities that enhance the skills and knowledge of community members. The structure of VDBs, with regular meetings and open forums for discussion, aligns with Pateman's advocacy for institutional designs that facilitate active participation and deliberation [25].

In practice, participatory democracy through VDBs can be seen in various regions of Indonesia. For instance, in some villages in Yogyakarta, VDBs have successfully engaged community members in developing local infrastructure

projects. Villagers participate in discussions, propose ideas, and contribute to decision-making processes, leading to projects that are better tailored to local needs and enjoy higher community support [13].

The principles of participatory democracy, as articulated by Carole Pateman, provide a robust theoretical framework for understanding and enhancing the role of Village Development Boards in Indonesia. By fostering direct participation, deliberation, inclusion, transparency, and accountability, VDBs can transform village governance, making it more responsive, inclusive, and effective. This alignment with participatory democracy principles underscores the potential of VDBs to drive sustainable and community-centered development at the grassroots level.

### *B. Grassroots Democracy*

Grassroots democracy is a form of democracy that emphasizes the active participation and empowerment of local communities in governance. This approach prioritizes the involvement of individuals at the most local level—such as villages or neighborhoods—in the decision-making processes that affect their daily lives. Grassroots democracy is rooted in the belief that political power and decision-making should be decentralized and accessible to ordinary people, allowing them to have a direct say in how their communities are run [27].

In the context of Village Development Boards (VDBs) in Indonesia, grassroots democracy plays a crucial role in enhancing local governance. VDBs are established to empower villagers and involve them in the governance and development of their communities. By fostering a participatory approach, VDBs ensure that development initiatives reflect the genuine needs and aspirations of the community. This involvement helps to build a sense of ownership and accountability among villagers, as they are directly engaged in shaping the future of their village.

Grassroots democracy also emphasizes the importance of local leadership, local representative, and capacity building. It supports the development of local leaders who are knowledgeable about their community's issues and are committed to advocating for their neighbors' needs [27]. In Indonesia, VDBs often provide training and support to local leaders and community members, enhancing their ability to participate effectively in governance. This capacity building is essential for creating sustainable and resilient local governance structures that can adapt to changing circumstances and challenges [3].

A prominent advocate of grassroots democracy is political scientist and activist Benjamin Barber, whose work underscores the importance of strong, participatory local governance. Barber argues that empowering local communities to govern themselves fosters civic engagement, builds social capital, and strengthens democracy as a whole. His ideas are particularly relevant to the Indonesian context, where VDBs aim to decentralize power and enhance community participation in governance [29].

The principles of grassroots democracy are evident in the functioning of VDBs across Indonesia. For example, in rural

areas of Java, VDBs have successfully mobilized community members to participate in local development projects, such as improving infrastructure and providing public services [30]. These initiatives are driven by the active involvement of villagers, who contribute their ideas, labor, and resources to the projects. This collaborative approach not only improves the effectiveness of development efforts but also strengthens community bonds and trust in local governance.

In conclusion, grassroots democracy provides a valuable framework for understanding the role of Village Development Boards in promoting local governance in Indonesia. By emphasizing direct participation, local decision-making, and community empowerment, grassroots democracy helps to create more responsive, inclusive, and effective governance structures. The success of VDBs in various Indonesian villages demonstrates the transformative potential of grassroots democracy in achieving sustainable and community-centered development.

### *C. Social Capital Theory*

Robert Putnam's social capital theory emphasizes the importance of networks, trust, and community engagement in fostering social cohesion and effective governance. According to Putnam, social capital consists of the connections among individuals and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. He highlights the role of social networks, both formal (such as community organizations and local councils) and informal (like friendships and neighborhood ties), in building social capital [33, 34]. In the context of Village Development Boards (VDBs) in Indonesia, these networks enable villagers to collaborate on development projects and share resources and information, enhancing community cooperation [32].

Trust is another crucial component of social capital. Putnam argues that communities with high levels of trust are better able to work together effectively and address common challenges [33]. For VDBs, fostering trust among villagers ensures more active participation and collective action, leading to more successful and sustainable development outcomes. Community engagement, or the active involvement of individuals in their community's affairs, is also essential. Putnam believes that engaged communities are more vibrant and resilient. VDBs facilitate this engagement by involving villagers in decision-making processes, ensuring that development initiatives reflect the community's needs and priorities [28]. Thus, Putnam's social capital theory provides a valuable framework for understanding how VDBs can enhance local governance and drive community-driven development in Indonesia.

## **4. Village Development Boards: A Literature Review**

### *A. Definition of Village Development Board (VDB)*

A Village Development Board (VDB) is a local governance institution established to facilitate and oversee the development activities within a village. Its primary aim is to promote self-sufficiency, justice, and prosperity at the village level by ensuring that development initiatives are community-driven

and reflective of the local needs and potential. VDBs play a crucial role in decentralizing power, allowing villages to take an active part in managing their own development and leveraging local wisdom and resources to achieve sustainable growth [1, 2].

### B. Function and Role in Improving Participation

The primary function of a VDB is to foster community participation in the development process. This involves mobilizing villagers to engage in decision-making, planning, and implementing local projects. [5] emphasizes that by adopting a paradigm shift where villages are seen as subjects rather than objects of development, VDBs help cultivate active community involvement and strengthen the relationship between villages and broader governance structures. VDBs also play a pivotal role in institutional transformation, as highlighted by [12], who note that successful transformation towards smart village governance relies on active community participation and cooperation with various stakeholders, including the government, universities, private sector, and local communities [15].

Furthermore, the engagement of the community in VDB activities ensures that development projects are well-tailored to local needs, which enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of these initiatives. [4] points out that despite significant progress, many villages in Indonesia remain underdeveloped. VDBs can address these challenges by involving villagers directly in the governance process, thus promoting better resource management and more effective development strategies [16] and [17].

### C. Impact of an Effective VDB

An effective VDB has a profound impact on village development by enhancing economic growth, social cohesion, and overall community welfare. According to [9], village economic development has been significantly bolstered by the establishment of Village Economic Enterprises (BUMDes), which serve as the main drivers of local economic activities. These enterprises, supported by VDBs, contribute to the economic independence of villages and improve the livelihoods of the villagers through entrepreneurial leadership, institutional reforms, and inclusive community participation.

[10] underscores the importance of community participation

in village development through BUMDes. The study reveals that different regions exhibit unique participation patterns influenced by their topography, but common motivations include increased income, stronger community institutions, and enhanced social networks. Effective VDBs facilitate this participation by organizing training sessions and fostering a sense of ownership among villagers, which ultimately leads to more successful and sustainable development outcomes.

In summary, Village Development Boards (VDBs) play a critical role in improving participation and driving effective development at the village level. By empowering communities to take charge of their own development, it fosters strong local governance structures, as community members are directly involved in decision-making processes, ensuring that development initiatives are tailored to their specific needs and priorities. Additionally, VDBs leverage local resources and knowledge, utilizing the unique assets and insights of the community to implement sustainable and contextually relevant development projects. This localized approach not only enhances the quality of life in rural areas by addressing immediate needs but also contributes to broader national development goals by building resilient, self-sufficient communities capable of driving their own progress. By enhancing participation, promoting transparency and accountability, and ensuring that development efforts are community-driven, VDBs play an indispensable role in achieving sustainable and inclusive growth.

## 5. Comparative Analysis of the Role, Effectiveness, and Challenges of Village Development Boards (VDBs)

### A. Role of Village Development Boards (VDBs)

The role of Village Development Boards (VDBs) is central to the planning, implementation, and oversight of village development projects. Across the case studies, VDBs are shown to play critical roles in facilitating community participation, ensuring transparency, and promoting sustainable development.

### B. Effectiveness of VDBs

The effectiveness of VDBs varies across the case studies, influenced by factors such as the quality of human resources, the strength of institutional frameworks, and the level of community engagement.

Table 1  
Case studies on VDB's role in Indonesia

No.	Case Studies	Summary of Research
1.	Improving Roles of VDB, a case Study at Golo Manting Village, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia [2]	In the context of Desa Golo Manting, the VDB's role is emphasized in enhancing the capacity of village officials and ensuring proper planning processes. The need for institutional strengthening and capacity building is highlighted as essential for effective development.
2.	Relationship between Village Head and VDB, Case Study at Panasen Village, Minahasa District, North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia [7]	The study of Desa Panasen focuses on the collaborative relationship between the Village Head and the VDB in infrastructure development. The VDB's role includes discussing and approving village regulations and budgets, indicating a legislative and supervisory function.
3.	Roles and Functions of VDB towards Village Development, a Case Study at Karanganyar Village, Central Java Province, Indonesia [8]	The VDB is responsible for overseeing development programs and ensuring they align with statutory regulations. Their role is compromised due to issues like corruption and nepotism, leading to significant governance challenges.
4.	Roles of VDB in Village Development Planning, a Case Study at Mekarharja Village, Banjar City, West Java Province [13]	The VDB in Desa Mekarharja is involved in all stages of development planning, implementation, and supervision. The VDB's effectiveness is linked to their knowledge and understanding of their duties.

Table 2  
Level of effectiveness of VDB at four case studies

No.	Case Studies	Level of Effectiveness	Rationale
1	Golo Manting Village, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia	Medium	The VDB's role is hampered by weak institutional capacity and a lack of effective control mechanisms. However, efforts to enhance capacity are underway, suggesting a potential for improved effectiveness.
2	Panasen Village, Minahasa District, North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia	Low	While infrastructure development proceeds, the VDB's role is described as less effective due to poor performance in community engagement and oversight. The lack of active participation by VDB members undermines their effectiveness.
3	Karanganyar Village, Central Java Province, Indonesia	Low	The effectiveness is severely impacted by governance issues such as corruption and the withdrawal of VDB members due to their inability to address these problems. This results in a two-year hiatus in VDB operations, greatly affecting development outcomes.
4	Mekarharja Village, Banjar City, West Java Province	Medium	The VDB shows effectiveness in planning and implementation stages, but challenges remain in terms of resource limitations and partnership cooperation. Nonetheless, their role is generally well-executed, contributing to development efforts.

Table 3  
Summary and ranking of effectiveness

No.	Case Studies	Summary of Effectiveness	Remarks
1.	Mekarharja Village, Banjar City, West Java Province	Medium Effectiveness	Effective in planning and implementation but needs improvement in resource management and member training
2.	Golo Manting Village, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia	Medium Effectiveness	Showing potential for improvement with ongoing capacity-building efforts
3.	Panasen Village, Minahasa District, North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia	Low Effectiveness	Poor performance due to inactive VDB members and inadequate role understanding
4.	Karanganyar Village, Central Java Province, Indonesia	Low Effectiveness	Severely hampered by corruption and governance issues, leading to a hiatus in VDB operations

### C. Challenges Faced by VDBs

Each case study highlights distinct challenges that affect the performance and effectiveness of Village Development Boards (VDBs). In Desa Golo Manting, the primary challenges revolve around weak institutional capacity and the need for more effective planning processes and control mechanisms. The absence of robust village governance structures further limits the VDB's effectiveness, making it difficult to achieve their development goals.

In Desa Panasen [7], the effectiveness of the VDB is hampered by the ineffective performance of its members. This issue stems from a lack of active participation from communities and other stakeholders and an inadequate understanding of their roles and responsibilities. As a result, the VDB struggles to fulfill its intended functions, affecting the overall progress of village development projects.

Desa Karanganyar faces significant challenges due to corruption and nepotism within village governance [8]. These issues lead to the disillusionment and withdrawal of VDB members, resulting in a substantial gap in VDB operations and oversight. The withdrawal of members severely impacts the board's ability to oversee and implement development projects, undermining the village's development efforts.

Despite generally being effective, Desa Mekarharja's VDB faces challenges related to limited resources, weak partnership cooperation, and insufficient knowledge among its members about their duties [13]. These factors inhibit the VDB's full potential, although they manage to contribute positively to village development. Addressing these challenges could further enhance their effectiveness and ensure more sustainable development outcomes.

### D. Summary of Effectiveness

The effectiveness of Village Development Boards (VDBs) varies across different regions in Indonesia. In Mekarharja Village, Banjar City, West Java Province, the VDB has demonstrated medium effectiveness, excelling in planning and implementation but requiring improvements in resource management and member training. Similarly, Golo Manting Village in East Nusa Tenggara Province shows medium effectiveness with ongoing capacity-building efforts indicating potential for future improvement. However, Panasen Village in Minahasa District, North Sulawesi Province, struggles with low effectiveness due to inactive members and a lack of understanding of their roles. Karanganyar Village in Central Java Province also faces low effectiveness, severely affected by corruption and governance issues, resulting in a complete halt of VDB operations. The summary of effectiveness of VDB in four villages is presented in Table 3.

Overall, while VDBs play a crucial role in village development, their effectiveness is contingent upon strong institutional capacity, active participation, and robust governance frameworks. Addressing these challenges is key to enhancing their impact on village development.

## 6. Analysis Towards Referenced Theories

### A. Participatory Democracy Theory

Referred to [35], [31] and [36], participatory democracy emphasizes the direct involvement of citizens in decision-making processes. Village Development Boards (VDBs) are designed to embody this principle by facilitating community participation in village planning, implementation, and

oversight. In Mekarharja Village, medium effectiveness is observed, particularly in planning and implementation, highlighting the community's active role in decision-making. However, the need for better resource management and member training underscores the importance of capacity-building to ensure informed and effective participation. Golo Manting Village, also showing medium effectiveness, is on a positive trajectory with ongoing capacity-building efforts enhancing the participatory process. Conversely, Panasen Village struggles with low effectiveness due to inactive VDB members and inadequate understanding of roles, suggesting a disconnect between the community and decision-making. In Karanganyar Village, severe challenges like corruption and governance issues lead to a halt in VDB operations, significantly undermining participatory democracy by eroding the essential trust and transparency needed for effective citizen involvement [25].

### *B. Grassroots Democracy*

As stated by [27], grassroots democracy focuses on empowering local communities to make decisions that directly affect their lives. VDBs serve as grassroots institutions intended to facilitate this empowerment. Mekarharja Village exemplifies grassroots democracy through comprehensive involvement in development planning and implementation. However, challenges in resource management and cooperation indicate the need to enhance local capabilities for sustained empowerment. Golo Manting Village demonstrates a commitment to grassroots democracy, with capacity-building efforts aimed at strengthening institutional frameworks. This focus on improving planning processes and control mechanisms is crucial for enabling effective local governance. In contrast, Panasen Village's low effectiveness highlights the pitfalls of inadequate grassroots democracy, where inactive VDB members and poor role understanding hinder effective community engagement. Strengthening member participation and role clarity is essential for revitalizing grassroots democracy. Karanganyar Village presents a severe case where corruption and governance issues undermine grassroots democracy, making it imperative to restore trust and accountability to re-establish effective local governance and empower the community.

### *C. Social Capital*

Social capital refers to the networks, norms, and trust that facilitate cooperation within a community [33], [34], and [32]. VDBs play a vital role in building and leveraging social capital for village development. In Mekarharja Village, relatively high social capital is evident through effective planning and implementation efforts. Improving resource management and member training can further enhance this social capital, leading to more robust development outcomes. Golo Manting Village is developing its social capital through capacity-building initiatives, with efforts to strengthen institutional frameworks and control mechanisms enhancing trust and cooperation among community members. In Panasen Village, low social capital is due to inactive participation and inadequate role

understanding. Building active engagement and clear role comprehension can foster trust and cooperation, thereby enhancing social capital. Karanganyar Village faces depleted social capital due to corruption and governance issues, making it crucial to rebuild trust and accountability for restoring social capital and enabling effective community collaboration.

### *D. Contribution to Strengthening VDBs*

To strengthen VDBs and enhance their contribution to village development, several strategies are essential. Continuous capacity-building programs are necessary to enhance VDB members' understanding of roles, responsibilities, and resource management. Developing robust governance structures and control mechanisms is vital for ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective planning processes. Promoting active participation and inclusive decision-making processes ensures that all community members have a voice in governance. Implementing stringent anti-corruption measures and fostering a culture of integrity and accountability within VDBs is crucial for combating corruption. Additionally, improving resource allocation and management practices ensures the efficient use of available resources for development projects. Addressing these areas will enable VDBs to be more effective in promoting participatory democracy, empowering grassroots governance, and leveraging social capital for sustainable and inclusive village development.

## **7. Policy Recommendations**

### *A. Strengthening VDB Frameworks*

To enhance the effectiveness of Village Development Boards (VDBs), it is crucial to strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks that support their operations [17]. One way to achieve this is by revising existing laws to clearly define the roles, responsibilities, and powers of VDBs. This would eliminate ambiguities and ensure that VDBs have a solid legal basis for their activities. Additionally, creating standardized procedures for planning, implementation, and oversight of development projects can help streamline VDB operations and improve accountability.

Establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation system is another essential step [11]. This system should track the progress of VDB initiatives, assess their impact, and identify areas for improvement. Providing legal safeguards to protect VDB members from undue political influence and ensuring their autonomy in decision-making processes can further strengthen the institutional framework. Regular audits and transparent reporting mechanisms would also enhance accountability and trust in VDBs [11].

### *B. Capacity Building Programs*

Implementing comprehensive capacity-building programs is vital to equip VDB members and community stakeholders with the necessary skills and knowledge. These programs should cover various aspects of village governance, including project management, financial literacy, legal compliance, and community engagement. Tailored training sessions can help VDB members understand their roles better and perform their

duties more effectively.

Workshops and seminars that bring together VDB members from different villages can facilitate the sharing of best practices and innovative solutions to common challenges. Partnering with academic institutions, NGOs, and government agencies to provide continuous education and support can ensure that VDB members stay updated with the latest developments in village governance and development strategies.

Additionally, establishing mentorship programs where experienced VDB members can guide new or less experienced members can foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement. Providing access to resources, such as manuals, toolkits, and online courses, can further enhance the capacity of VDB members and stakeholders.

### C. Fostering Inclusive Practices

To ensure broad-based community participation, it is essential to advocate for practices that enhance inclusivity within VDB operations. Encouraging the representation of diverse community groups, including women, youth, and marginalized populations, in VDBs can ensure that a wide range of perspectives are considered in decision-making processes [14]. Implementing quota systems or other affirmative action policies can help achieve this goal.

Promoting transparent and participatory planning processes is also crucial. VDBs should organize regular community meetings and consultations [6] to gather input and feedback from residents on development projects and priorities [14]. Creating platforms for online and offline engagement can facilitate greater involvement of community members who may not be able to attend meetings in person.

Ensuring that information about VDB activities and decisions is widely disseminated through various channels, such as community notice boards, social media, and local radio, can keep the community informed and engaged. Establishing grievance redress mechanisms where community members can voice concerns and suggestions can also improve the responsiveness and accountability of VDBs [6].

By implementing these policy recommendations, VDBs can become more effective, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of their communities, ultimately contributing to more sustainable and equitable village development.

## 8. Conclusion

### A. Summary of Key Findings

The analysis of Village Development Boards (VDBs) reveals their significant impact on enhancing community participation and improving village governance. Key findings indicate that effective VDBs lead to more transparent and accountable governance structures, fostering greater community involvement in decision-making processes. However, challenges such as weak institutional capacity, inadequate understanding of roles, corruption, and limited resources hinder their full potential. The case studies demonstrate that VDBs in villages like Desa Golo Manting and Desa Panasen struggle

with institutional weaknesses and ineffective member performance, while Desa Karanganyar faces governance issues like corruption. Conversely, Desa Mekarharja, despite its challenges, shows a more effective and participatory governance model.

### B. Future Directions

Future research should focus on developing comprehensive frameworks for enhancing VDB effectiveness, particularly in areas with identified weaknesses. Studies could explore the implementation of advanced training programs and capacity-building initiatives tailored to the specific needs of VDB members. Additionally, research could examine the impact of technological innovations and digital tools in supporting VDB operations and fostering greater community engagement. Practical approaches might include piloting new governance models that integrate best practices from more successful VDBs and scaling these models across different regions. Exploring the dynamics of power relations within VDBs and between VDBs and other governmental bodies could provide deeper insights into improving collaboration and governance outcomes.

### C. Final Thoughts

Village Development Boards hold transformative potential for rural governance, turning villages from passive recipients of development aid into active participants in their own development. By addressing the challenges identified and leveraging the strengths observed in various case studies, VDBs can play a pivotal role in achieving sustainable and equitable development. Strengthened by robust legal frameworks, enhanced capacity-building, and inclusive practices, VDBs can become powerful catalysts for change, promoting self-sufficiency, justice, and prosperity in rural communities. The continued evolution and refinement of VDBs will be crucial in realizing the broader vision of national development beginning at the village level.

## References

- [1] Indonesian Law No. 32 Year 2004 and the Indonesian Law No. 6, Year 2014 concerning Village.
- [2] Lestari, A. T. (2021). Peningkatan Kapasitas Peranan Badan Permusyawaratan Desa Dalam Perencanaan Pembangunan Studi Kasus Desa Golo Manting Kec. Sano Nggoang Kab. Manggarai Barat). *Jurnal Inovasi Sektor Publik*, Volume 1, No. 3, 2021.
- [3] Ruslie, A.S., and Wisnumurti, R.W. (2024). Village Development Board its Role and Function in Supervision of Village Government in Bareng District, Jombang District East Java Province. *Jurnal Multidisiplin Madani (Mudima)*. Vol. 4, No. 2, 297-309, Feb. 2024
- [4] Sunggoro, A.S. (2022). Village Development in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Science*, 2(2), February 2022.
- [5] Sutopo, D.S. (2024). Masa Depan Pembangunan Desa di Tangan Pemimpin Baru (The Future of Village Development in the Hands of New Leaders. *Jurnal Intelak dan Cendekiawan Nusantara (JICN)*. Vol. 1 No. 1, February 2024.
- [6] Firman, F. (2020). Peranan Badan Permusyawaratan Desa dalam Penyelenggaraan Pemerintahan di Desa. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Ilmiah Hukum*. vol. 23, no. 1, 2020.
- [7] Kalangi, I.M.M.J., Pinori, J.J., and Palilingan, T.K.R. (2024). Hubungan Kerja Antara Kepala Desa Dan Badan Permusyawaratan Desa (BPD) Dalam Pembangunan Infrastruktur Desa Panasen.
- [8] Melisa, I. (2021). Peran Dan Fungsi Badan Permusyawaratan. Peran Dan Fungsi Badan Permusyawaratan Desa (BPD) Terhadap Peningkatan Program Pembangunan Desa. (Studi Kasus Desa Karanganyar Kecamatan

- Reban Kabupaten Batang). *Warta Governare: Jurnal Pemerintahan*, Vol. 2, No. 1, January-June 2021.
- [9] Afala, L.O.M., and Rahayu, R.K. (2023). What Makes Village Economic Development Successful? Evidence in Two Villages, Malang Regency Indonesia. *Journal of Governance*, Volume 8, No. 2, 177-196, June 2023.
- [10] Maryunani, M. (2023). Increasing Community Participation in Village Development through BUMDesa Management in East Java. *Journal of Community Development in Asia*, 6(2), 99-112.
- [11] Helmi, S.R., and Khoirunrofik. (2023). Does village fund audit affect village development? An empirical study of villages in Aceh Province. *Jurnal Tata Kelola Dan Akuntabilitas Keuangan Negara*. Volume 9, Number 2, 2023: 247-270.
- [12] Anggraheni, S., Nurjaman, A., and Kamil, M. (2022). Village Institutional Transformation to Smart Village Governance in Tourism Village Development. *Journal Public Policy*. Vol. 8, No. 2, April 2022.
- [13] Ibrahim, T., and Nisa, K. (2023). Peran Badan Permusyawaratan Desa (BPD) Dalam Perencanaan Pembangunan Desa (Studi Kasus Di Desa Mekarharja Kecamatan Purwaharja Kota Banjar). *Jurnal – STISIP Bina Putera Banjar* 2023.
- [14] Wahyudi, S., and Khannanah, S.F. (2021). The Role of the Village Government to Increase Community Participation in Village Development (Study in Sidorejo Village, Jabung District, Malang Regency). *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal)*. Volume 4, No. 4, November 2021, pp. 14221-14228.
- [15] Siswanto, B., Sadhana, K., and Tomo, Y. (2017). Community Participation and Stakeholders in Village Fund Management. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*. Vol. 8, No. 20, 2017.
- [16] Nisa, G.D. (2024). Community Participation in Village Development Planning: A Comparative Study in Bakambat and Cindai Alus Villages. *Journal of Transformative Governance and Social Justice (J-TRAGOS)*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2024, pp. 25-41.
- [17] Putra, F. (2023). 'Village Governance and Public Participation in Indonesia'. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Socio-Economic and Community Study*, Volume 3, Number 2, pp. 55-64. Universitas Brawijaya.
- [18] Creswell JW. (2016). *Research design pendekatan metode kualitatif, kuantitatif, dan campuran*. Yogyakarta (ID): Pustaka Pelajar.
- [19] Moleong L. J. (2005). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- [20] Sugiyono. (2007). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- [21] Faisal, S. (1990). *Penelitian Kualitatif (dasar-dasar dan aplikasi)*. Malang: Ya3 Malang.
- [22] Koentjaraningrat. (1993). *Metode-metode Penelitian Masyarakat*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- [23] Mack, N., Woodson, C., Macqueen, K.M., Guest, G., Namey, E.Y. (2005). *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector'S Field Guide*. Family Health International.
- [24] Darlington, Y. and Dorothy S. (2002). *Qualitative Research in Practice*. Newsouth Wales: Allen and Unwin.
- [25] Pateman, C. (2012). *Participatory Democracy Revisited*. APSA Presidential Address, Vol. 10, No. 1, March 2012.
- [26] Phillips, A., Medearis, J., and O'Neill, D.I. (2010). *The Political Theory of Carole Pateman*. Association News. October, 2010.
- [27] Nguyen, K.N.V. (2024). The Role of Implementing Grassroot Democracy in Vietnam Currently. *Social Science and Humanities Journal*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 34748-34754.
- [28] Dharendra Wardhana. (2019). Decentralization, Democratization, And Social Protection in Indonesia: A Systematic Review of the Literature. *he Indonesian Journal of Development Planning*. Volume 3, No. 2, August 2019.
- [29] Barber, B. (2003). *Strong Democracy, Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Twentieth Anniversary Edition with a New Preface. University of California Press.
- [30] Mardiyanta, A. (2013). Restore Public Trust Through Deliberative Public Policy Formulation, *BISNIS & BIROKRASI: Jurnal Ilmu Administrasi dan Organisasi*, Vol. 20, No. 1.
- [31] Aslam, Ali, David McIvor, and Joel A. Schlosser. 2019. "Democratic Theory When Democracy Is Fugitive." *Democratic Theory* 6.2: 27-40.
- [32] Tjahjono, A.F., Mashud, M., and Suaedi, F. (2022). Implementation of social capital for multipurpose cooperative autonomy (Implementasi modal sosial untuk otonomi koperasi serbaguna). *Masyarakat, Kebudayaan dan Politik* Vol. 35, Issue 1, pp. 44-57, 2022.
- [33] Tristan, Claridge. (2021). *Evolution of the concept of social capital*. *Social Capital Research*, 2021.
- [34] Breuskin, I. (2012). *Social Capital and Governmental Institutions*. *Living Reviews in Democracy*, 2012. Center for Comparative and International Studies, ETH Zurich and University of Zurich.
- [35] Brennan, J. 2017. *Against Democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- [36] Hague, Barry N. and Brian D. Loader. 2005. "Digital Democracy: An Introduction." In *Digital Democracy: Discourse and Decision Making in the Information Age*, ed. Barry N. Hague and Brian D. Loader, 17–36. New York: Routledge.