

Village Head Leadership in Implementing the Village Development Movement Program in West Malinau Sub-district, Malinau Regency

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ABSTRACT

To realize the Village Building Movement (GERDEMA) in West Malinau District, Malinau Regency, it is necessary to have sensitive Village Head leadership. The Village Head must listen to suggestions and views from the people around him, be an example to others, behave consistently, remain loyal to his promises and to his government, and be able to make decisions in accordance with the ideals and expectations of the community. The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze how Village Head Leadership influences the implementation of the Village Development Movement Program (GERDEMA) in West Malinau District, Malinau Regency. Although leadership problems among Village Heads have been addressed in general, in reality, these issues have not been fully and optimally resolved. The method used is qualitative, aiming to explore and understand the meanings held by individuals or groups regarding social or humanitarian issues. The purpose of this qualitative research is to understand particular situations, events, roles, groups, or social interactions that are considered social problems. The results of the study show that Village Head Leadership in the implementation of the Village Movement Program in West Malinau District is carried out effectively. The Village Head demonstrates good sensitivity, embodies an exemplary spirit that serves as a model, complies well with program implementation in the village, and exhibits leadership and integrity in executing the Village Development Movement (GERDEMA) program.

KEYWORDS Leadership, Village Development, Gerdema Program.



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INTRODUCTION

The direction of rural development policy today requires changes in the community order in the form of the emergence of local initiatives, increased participation, especially the reallocation of existing resources through planning and development of development programs as a vehicle for community empowerment in rural development (Berenschot et al., 2024). According to Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, village development aims to a) improve the welfare of village communities; b) improve the quality of human life; c) overcome poverty; d) meet basic needs; e) build village facilities and infrastructure; f) develop local economic potential; and g) utilize natural resources (Arifin et al., 2020).

Malinau Regency, as one of the regions in Indonesia, was formed based on Law Number 47 of 1999 concerning the Establishment of Nunukan Regency, Malinau Regency, West Kutai Regency, East Kutai Regency, and Bontang City. The implementation of strategies, policies, programs, and development activities listed in the Regional Medium-Term Program Plan of the Malinau Regency RPJMD for 2016-2021 has yielded results in improving the welfare of the people and the progress of the region. The lives of the village community in Malinau

Regency gradually continue to advance and develop. This progress has raised hope and optimism among the community and the Regional Government of Malinau Regency that the dynamics of development have provided a clearer direction towards a more advanced and prosperous way of life (Hidayah et al., 2019).

Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency in 2020, the number of villages in Malinau Regency amounted to 109 villages, most of which are rural communities spread across various inland and border areas in Malinau Regency. The concept of Regional Development, which is the Development of the Village Development Movement (Gerdema), is given the freedom and independence to plan, implement, and evaluate the implementation of development with the support of certain funding sources for the improvement of the welfare of the village community.

The Building Village Movement (GERDEMA) is based on the determination and spirit to invite all the people of Malinau Regency to change together in achieving progress and welfare—change to move forward and achieve prosperity. Change to catch up, move forward, overcome poverty, and achieve prosperity with the increase in the socio-economy of the people (Kushandajani & Alfirdaus, 2019).

To realize the Village Development Movement (GERDEMA), the leadership of the Village Head is needed, who can accommodate, lead, direct, and supervise development in the village so it can run in accordance with the needs and priorities of the community and be built in line with the ideals and expectations of the community (Puri & Khoirunurrofik, 2024; Ricks, 2016)). The Building Village Movement Program in Malinau Regency has been running for ten years. Many developments have been carried out in Malinau Regency, especially in Kuala Lapang Village and Sempayang Village, which have been successful with the implementation of the GERDEMA program. The success of development in Kuala Lapang Village and Sempayang Village with the Gerdema program is guided by the 4 pillars of development in the village for two years, namely 2019 and 2020: Infrastructure Development, Improving the Quality of Human Resources, Improving People's Economic Development, and Implementation of Clean and Accountable Governance/Bureaucratic Reform (Sarjiyanto, 2022).

In accordance with the GERDEMA concept, development from the community is carried out by the community and for the community. The role of the Village Head here is very important as the highest leader at the village level, required to bring development progress in the village they lead. The results achieved from the Village Head development program include the construction of village infrastructure such as roads, drainage, bridge construction, and other infrastructure facilities; Human Resource Development (improving the quality of educators, providing incentive assistance to PAUD teachers); programs to improve the people's economy (increasing the production of food crops, assistance with agricultural tools, making rice paddies, training on appropriate technology, technical guidance, and other activities); and the achievement of a clean and accountable governance program (implementation of Musrenbangdes, preparation of regional regulations, preparation of Village Head reports, and development of village information systems). The leadership of the Village Head as a leader in village government must be able to provide examples in changing the work ethos and behavior of the apparatus so that they are disciplined in carrying out their duties, responsible, loyal and

with integrity, present in the office during working hours, and provide excellent service to the community (Sofyani et al., 2019).

Previous studies on Malinau's Village Development Movement (GERDEMA) show mixed implementation outcomes. Pandawa (2017) finds that GERDEMA and Village Fund allocations tended to prioritize physical infrastructure over empowerment, with limited poverty reduction, and calls for stronger transparency, accountability, and sustained facilitation—yet the study stops short of examining how village leadership practices drive those outcomes in specific sites. Similarly, Cledwin et al. (2024) report that GERDEMA/RT-BERSIH fund management in Taras Village is broadly “effective,” but still hampered by low community understanding, coordination gaps, and disbursement delays, without linking these bottlenecks to leadership communication strategies or comparative multi-village evidence.

This study aims to (1) map leadership and communication practices that reduce implementation frictions; (2) evaluate their association with tangible outputs and outcomes across pillars; and (3) formulate governance and capacity-building recommendations for village governments. Theoretically, the study advances village governance literature by integrating leadership–communication mechanisms into GERDEMA effectiveness; practically, it provides actionable guidance for Malinau's villages and the district government to strengthen planning, participation, and accountability, and offers a replicable model for rural development in other Indonesian districts.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used Qualitative Descriptive research. Data were obtained from informants selected through the Snowball Sampling technique and Purposive Sampling to ensure relevance to the research focus. Primary data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with key informants directly involved in or affected by the implementation of GERDEMA, including the Head of Village Government, Chairman of LPM, Traditional Leaders, Youth Organizations, Heads of RTs, and community members.

Field observations of village activities, meetings, and development projects complemented the interviews. Secondary data consisted of policy documents, statistical reports, previous research, and books related to GERDEMA and rural development.

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's Interactive Model with stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Triangulation of data sources and member checks with key informants were applied to enhance credibility. This approach enabled the construction of a comprehensive understanding of how leadership and persuasive communication contributed to the success and sustainability of GERDEMA in the studied villages. This study used Qualitative Descriptive research. Data were collected from informants selected through Snowball Sampling and Purposive Sampling techniques to ensure their relevance to the research focus. Primary data came from in-depth, semi-structured interviews with key informants involved in or affected by GERDEMA implementation, including the Head of Village Government, Chairman of LPM, Traditional Leaders, Youth Organizations, Heads of RTs, and community members.

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RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Leaders' Sensitivity to Environmental Climate and Environmental Situations Who Want to Listen to Input from People Around

Based on the results of observations and based on information sources from other respondents, indeed from each opinion of the Respondent is different, but in general, the author concludes that the leadership of the Head of Sempayang Village generally finds a positive response to the leadership of the existing Village Head with charisma, performance and achievements shown by the Village Head is always a positive consideration from the residents of Sempayang on the performance of the Village Head and based on Information from the Malinau Regency Village Community Empowerment Office that the Village Head received an award as the second (2) best Village Head at the North Kalimantan Provincial level out of 447 existing Village Heads.

In Leadership, where not all can satisfy all community groups, there will definitely be pros and cons from a leadership or policy of development direction in an organization, not much different in the leadership of the existing Village Head. Based on the observations and results of interviews conducted by the author in the field, in general the leadership of the Head of Sempayang Village is quite good.

The leadership of the Head of Sempayang Village in terms of listening to the aspirations and suggestions from the community on the problems and obstacles of the Building Village Movement Program is quite good and responsive. That as with the development concept of the Village Building Movement with the concept of "From the People, By the People and For the People" puts the village community as the main actors of development in the Village.

According to the author's observation, the Head of Sempayang Village has a strong commitment and integrity in building Sempayang Village by always trying to see the needs of the community and listen to the aspirations and suggestions directly from the community, then evaluate the problems and obstacles in the implementation of development in the Village and the Village Head actively performs coordination and communication functions with OPD and related communities regarding the direction of development policies in the region in line with the Regional Vision and Mission in realizing a developed and prosperous society.

The leadership of the Head of Kuala Lapang Village is good enough in the implementation of his leadership to be willing to listen to the aspirations and responsiveness to the problems that exist in the Village related to the success of the implementation of the Building Village Development Program (GERDEMA) when there are obstacles in the implementation in the field, the Village Head is responsive to solving problems in the Village.

The Head of Kuala Lapang Village with a fairly high level of education and a stable balance of emotional intelligence certainly supports the implementation of good leadership in realizing productive economic development, the development of supporting facilities and infrastructure, the creation of conducive security situations and conditions and the improvement of the economic welfare of the community.

Example of Village Heads Because of Goodness of Attitudes and Behaviors That Set Examples and Examples to the Community

The results of observations and analyses carried out by the author for some time about the Exemplary Head of Sempayang Village that the author assesses that with his background as a graduate of Theology (Christian Religious Education) it affects his behavior and leadership style, this is the author analyzes from how his attitude and ethics are humble, listening to directions or input from others, With a popular leadership style, easy to get along with and easy to smile so that he is known close and familiar with his citizens. In addition, in carrying out his duties as a leader or superior of the village apparatus, he is known to be friendly but firm in his leadership and direction, his orders to carry out his duties in accordance with the applicable provisions and procedures, avoid acts that violate the rules and laws that have criminal consequences and harm the community.

Sempayang Village in 2022 has several activities in development in the village in several fields of development, including:

1. Village Infrastructure Sector
 - a. Farm Road construction activities
 - b. Agricultural Irrigation Development
 - c. Cementing the road in the Alley
 - d. Making Rice Fields
2. Economics
 - a. Procurement of Agricultural Production Equipment
 - b. Technical Guidance on the introduction of Appropriate Technology

The implementation of the activity program, which has been programmed in the APBDes, has been carried out in 2022 and can be used in accordance with its designation and can be used by the community in supporting the implementation of agricultural activities in increasing the production of agricultural products to be used to meet the economic needs of families and agricultural products can be marketed to increase community income.

From the above understanding and explanation, the author concludes that the Leadership of the Head of Sempayang Village as a Leader in providing an example of attitudes and behaviors that have provided a good example and example to the people of Sempayang Village, a Leader has a clear commitment to the success of the Village Movement Program, building in accordance with the program or activities that have been set together, can build clear instructions to the subordinates to carry out orders to realize village progress, besides that the Village Head figure is responsible for the position given by the community and has the ability to build good relations with the community as a good leader and has a vision to bring change and progress to Sempayang Village.

Kuala Lapang Village as one of the locations or objects of the research that the author researches with the same research focus on the Example of the Village Head in providing examples and examples to the community.

In terms of leadership, the Head of Kuala Lapang Village is good enough to be able to provide a good example and example in terms of ethics and norms on how a good leader with ethics of politeness, friendliness, respect for others and a humble leader willing to listen to the aspirations of the community. The leadership of the Head of Kuala Lapang Village has a strong determination and commitment to build the Village, this can be seen by the breakthrough in road construction in the Village, such as Development in the Infrastructure Sector, the construction of road access to residential areas that previously could not be reached by vehicles.

In 2022, the Kuala Lapang Village Government has a priority for the development of Improving Infrastructure Facilities and Increasing Community Economic Activities with several activities carried out, including:

1. Village Infrastructure Sector
 - a. Construction of Sports Facilities (Futsal Field)
 - b. Construction of the reading room
 - c. Semenization of Roads in Alleys
 - d. Drainage / Waste Disposal Development
2. Economics
 - a. Development of Rice Fields
 - b. Pepper Seed Procurement
 - c. Procurement of Fish Seeds (Catfish, Tilapia, Mas)

The implementation of the 2022 activity program has been carried out well, the development of village infrastructure has been built and can be used by the community, such as sports facilities, Futsal fields are used for sports activities, the use of reading rooms by children and the community can enjoy and use access roads that have been cemented and the smooth development of residents' drainage channels. In the field of Economics, the procurement of pepper seeds and fish seeds has been distributed to residents in need according to the scale of priority and readiness of pond land for the nursery and development of fish seeds and the function of rice paddies can be used properly by the community.

In addition, the leadership of the Village Head is quite good in his leadership from the attitude and behavior of the Village Head who is polite and friendly with the community, besides that based on observations in the field and other Respondents' information that he in the implementation of his duties as a Leader for the village staff has good leadership, discipline, firm and oriented to performance. In addition, in making decisions, seeing and considering proposals from the community in Musrenbangdes and final decision-making can be well received by the community. The Village Head in carrying out his duties as the Village Head is not all perfect in carrying out his duties, depending on the different community observations about the Leadership of the Kuala Lapang Village Head, but the author can conclude that he in carrying out his duties as the Village Head can show attitudes and behaviors that can provide good conoh and example to the community.

Compliance with Something or Instructions Given

The results of interviews and observations conducted by the author in Sempayang Village regarding Compliance with something or instructions given in accordance with the detailed questions presented by the author in the results of the Research obtained several conclusions that the Village Head's leadership during his current leadership period has loyalty and integrity as well as a good commitment in carrying out his duties as a Village Head. This can be seen how his discipline to provide an example of attending and returning from work on time according to working hours, obedient in implementing the rules, having responsibility for his position and work as the Village Head. Having a good attitude of integrity in the successful implementation of the Village Movement builds consistency between actions with the values and principles of honesty and truth of one's actions. The attitude of integrity to realize words with deeds in the implementation of development activities in the village can be proven by real actions not only a speech but evidence where there is infrastructure development, agricultural equipment assistance for the community, the development of rice fields and irrigation and other activities in accordance with the pillars of development that have become the vision and mission of the Village Head in accordance with the inspiration from the community.

The results of the research on the Village Head's Leadership on Compliance carry out according to the instructions given in accordance with the details researched, the author argues that the Kuala Lapang Village Head has good loyalty to his work, has integrity and work ethic and good discipline and high commitment in the success of the Implementation of the Village Building Movement. This loyalty can be seen from integrity and loyalty in carrying out duties as leaders in the village, being responsible for decisions and activities carried out and building good cooperation and communication with stake holders and the community in realizing progress in the village.

Village Head Leadership Who Can Make Decisions

The author observes research in the field how the leadership of the Head of Sempayang Village in involving the community in deliberation in determining the Independent Village Movement Program (GERDEMA), does the Village Head respect every difference of opinion in providing advice and input for Development? The results of the analysis and based on the results of observations made by the author are generally in accordance with the principles of the concept of GERDEMA Development, namely "from the People, by the People and for the People" which places the village community as the main actors of village development. GERDEMA emphasized that the implementation of government and development is more based on the initiative and participation of the village community as the highest sovereign holder who must enjoy welfare.

From the explanation of the results of observations in the field and from the documentation data in the field, it shows that the leadership of the Head of Sempayang Village in making decisions on the role of involving the community in determining the Gerdema Development Program in the Village to the extent that the Village Head responds to any differences of opinion from the community in providing suggestions for development in the village has been carried out because it is mandatory to be carried out by involving the community in every proposal submission to the every activity in Sempayang Village is carried out in a deliberative manner in accordance with the stages and mechanisms regulated in the

Concept of the Village Building Movement with an emphasis on active involvement of the community in the implementation of development activities in the village starting from planning, implementation, supervision and evaluation of activities in the village.

The Head of Sempayang Village has skills in taking

Decisions and good and fast to differences and existing problems to immediately find the best solution to existing problems, can build good cooperation with the community in supporting the implementation of the Village Building Movement Program, this can be seen from the level of community participation involved in working together to build roads, work on irrigation development and other activities in the village, this is in accordance with the spirit of deception. community to be involved in village development activities and benefit from development and earn working wages in order to provide employment opportunities to the community to enjoy the results of development in the village and create jobs for the people of Sempayang village.

The same thing from the results of observations in the field on the leadership of the Head of Kuala Lapang Village that in accordance with the Concept of the Village Movement builds that the community has a role to be involved in determining the direction of Kuala Lapang village development policies in the future. The leadership role of the Head of Kuala Lapang Village is quite good where this can be observed from the level of participation and presence of the community in every Musrengandes RT activity, Musrenbangdes the activity as a forum for the community to convey their aspiration proposals and convey criticism and input on the results of development in the village and suggestions for the future.

The leadership of the Head of Kuala Lapang Village in appreciating and respecting every difference of opinion in providing suggestions and inputs for the implementation of development in the Village, in a democratic country it is a characteristic of Indonesian society in general and in particular Kuala Lapang Village is a strength as a capital for the implementation of accountable and transparent development.

The competence of the Kuala Lapang Village Head is quite good with charisma and supported by a high level of education influenced by the attitude and respect of different opinions from the community, then supported by his skill and firmness as the Village Head in making decisions quickly.

The nature and personality of the Kuala Lapang Village Head as a leader has a good leadership spirit, as a leader can set an example and encourage others to do better, more advanced in the future.

Cooperation and good ability of the Head of Kuala Lapang Village in involving the community and embracing residents to become actors in the implementation of development in the village by being involved in the process of planning, implementation and supervision as well as evaluating the implementation of development in the village. The active involvement of the community contributes to the potential for progress and realization of development in the village in a fair manner and based on the priority scale of the people of Kuala Lapang Village for the realization of the vision of Kuala Lapang Village.

CONCLUSION

The Village Head's leadership in implementing the Building Village Movement Program in West Malinau District was generally effective, marked by strong sensitivity, exemplary behavior, compliance, and integrity in program execution. Key supporting factors included budgetary support from local government, strong commitment, transparency, good coordination between local and village governments, and community backing, all contributing to the program's success in advancing community welfare. However, challenges such as low community participation in development activities, insufficient attendance at Musrenbangdes meetings, and gaps in communication and information flow between the village government, local government, and community hindered full engagement. Future research could explore strategies to enhance community involvement and improve communication channels to optimize program outcomes and sustainability.

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