

Designing Policies for the Empowerment of Older Adults Through Used Cooking Oil Management Within the Social Protection Framework

Suratna

Kementerian Sosial, Indonesia

Email: nq.suratna@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The increasing number of the elderly population in Indonesia demands a transformation of social protection policies that are not only protective, but also productive and sustainable. This research aims to formulate a policy design for the empowerment of the elderly through the management of used cooking oil in the framework of social protection based on collaborative governance. The research uses a qualitative approach with literature study methods and conceptual analysis of circular economy-based empowerment policies and practices. The results of the study show that the social protection policy of the elderly in Indonesia is still dominated by a charitable approach, so it has not been able to optimize the potential of the elderly as economic actors. On the other hand, used cooking oil management has significant economic and ecological potential, but has not been systematically integrated into policy design. The integration of these three dimensions allows for effective cross-sectoral collaboration between government, society, and the private sector. Therefore, this study recommends the transformation of the role of the government, especially the Ministry of Social Affairs, as a metagovernor who is able to orchestrate collaboration between actors in developing policies for the empowerment of the elderly based on the circular economy. This policy design is expected to improve the welfare of the elderly, strengthen social inclusion, and support sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

The increase in the number of elderly people in Indonesia demands a more adaptive role of the state in designing social protection policies that are not only protective but also transformative. Within the institutional framework, the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has a strategic mandate to conduct government affairs in the social sector, as stipulated in Law Number 11 of 2009 concerning Social Welfare and strengthened through Presidential Regulation Number 110 of 2021 concerning the Ministry of Social Affairs. These functions include the formulation, determination, and implementation of policies in the fields of social rehabilitation, social security, social empowerment, and the handling of the poor. Normatively, the mandate of social empowerment emphasizes that the state not only provides social assistance but also encourages increasing the capacity of individuals and groups to be economically and socially independent.

The increase in the proportion of the elderly population in Indonesia is a consequence of the demographic transition, which is characterized by a decline in the birth rate and an increase

in life expectancy. This condition encourages the state to strengthen the social protection system as an instrument to ensure the welfare of these vulnerable groups. The Government of Indonesia has established a legal framework through Law Number 13 of 1998 concerning the Welfare of the Elderly and Government Regulation Number 43 of 2004, which affirms the responsibility of the state, society, and family in improving the welfare of the elderly in an integrated and multisectoral manner (Kompas, 2022; Rusmini, 2022). In addition, Law Number 11 of 2009 concerning Social Welfare and Law Number 40 of 2004 concerning the National Social Security System affirm that social protection aims to prevent and address the risk of vulnerability so that individuals can meet their basic needs appropriately (Tursilarini, 2015).

Social protection plays a crucial role in creating inclusive and resilient rural transformation through capital mobilization, resource optimization, and risk management (Kangasniem et al., 2025). Meanwhile, migrant caregivers who live in (live-in) face social isolation, role ambiguity, and heavy workloads, while also having to adapt to cultural contexts and emotional relationships with the elderly individuals they care for (Lee et al., 2025).

The elderly population is defined as individuals aged 60 years and above and is projected to increase from 1.1 billion in 2023 to 1.4 billion in 2030 (WHO, 2024). Meanwhile, according to Medawati (2020), the elderly are a group of individuals who have entered the age of 60 years and above and are experiencing the aging process biologically, psychologically, and socially. The aging process is a natural stage in the life cycle, characterized by a decline in physical function and health, as well as changes in social roles within society. Indonesia is currently experiencing an aging population, with the proportion of elderly people increasing from 9.93 percent in 2020 to 11.93 percent in 2025. Furthermore, although 54.21 percent of the elderly are still working, most are employed in the informal sector, such as agriculture (52.22 percent), with work status dominated by self-employed or unpaid family workers (BPS, 2025). This condition indicates that the economic activities of the elderly have not yet been integrated into a productive and sustainable economic system. Thus, existing social protection policies have not been able to optimize the potential of the elderly as economic actors but still tend to focus on a residual rather than a comprehensive approach.

Table 1. Percentage of Indonesian Seniors, 2020 – 2025

Year	Percentage
2020	9,93%
2021	10,31%
2022	10,70%
2023	11,10%
2024	11,51%
2025	11,93%

Source: BPS, 2025

The low coverage of social protection for the elderly is an entry point to test the relevance of collaboration-based policy design in the framework of empowerment through used cooking oil management. Susenas-based data shows that the proportion of the elderly who receive government assistance is still limited, while most of the elderly remain in an economically vulnerable condition. This condition confirms that the social protection approach that has been carried out by the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has not been fully

able to reach all target groups effectively. Furthermore, the dominance of a charitable social assistance approach has not resulted in a sustainable transformation of the economic capacity of the elderly. Therefore, this study views that policy innovation that integrates local potential-based economic empowerment with a collaborative governance approach is an urgent need.

The implementation of social protection policies for the elderly at the regional level still faces various limitations, both in terms of regulation and program innovation. Not all local governments have specific policies that comprehensively accommodate the needs of the elderly, resulting in the still high number of abandoned and socially vulnerable elderly (Akbar & Phahlevy, 2021). The dominant social protection approach is still charitable and social assistance-based, so it has not fully encouraged the economic independence of the elderly. In fact, the contemporary social welfare paradigm emphasizes the importance of an empowerment approach that is able to integrate protection aspects with increasing the productive capacity of target groups.

The implementation of the social empowerment function by the Ministry of Social Affairs still faces limitations in integrating approaches based on local potential and circular economy. Social protection programs for the elderly tend to be oriented towards direct assistance such as the Family Hope Program (PKH) or other regular social assistance, which, although important, have not fully optimized the productive capacity of the elderly. This condition reflects the gap between the institutional mandate that emphasizes empowerment and policy practices that are still predominantly charitable (Tursilarini, 2015). On the other hand, the potential of used cooking oil management as part of the circular economy has not been systematically integrated in the design of social protection policies for the elderly, although various studies have shown that such waste treatment can increase economic value and social participation of the community (Bashith et al., 2022; Nurwidiana et al., 2024). There are as many as 16.19% of elderly households that are still recorded as PKH recipients according to village classification and expenditure distribution in 2025 (BPS, 2025).

In this context, the management of household waste, especially used cooking oil, offers strategic opportunities as the basis for innovative and sustainable policy interventions. Used cooking oil is a domestic waste that has a high volume and is often disposed of without treatment, causing negative impacts on the environment and health, such as water and soil pollution and the risk of disease due to the content of harmful compounds (Hidyus et al., 2023; Alfian et al., 2023). On the other hand, various studies show that used cooking oil has economic value when processed into derivative products such as soap, aromatherapy candles, and biodiesel (Hanum et al., 2025; Nurwidiana et al., 2024).

A number of community empowerment practices based on used cooking oil management in Indonesia have proven this potential. Training and mentoring programs are able to increase knowledge, participation, and community income through processing waste into value-added products (Kartika et al., 2021; Bashith et al., 2022). Waste bank models that integrate used cooking oil collection also show that waste can be converted into economic sources while increasing people's environmental awareness (Yustini & Prihastuty, 2023). However, most of these initiatives still focus on groups of housewives or the general community, and have not specifically targeted the elderly as the main subjects of empowerment. In fact, the elderly have the potential to remain productive if supported through the right policy design.

This gap shows the existence of factual as well as conceptual problems. Factually, an effective cross-sector coordination mechanism has not been built between the Ministry of Social Affairs and other actors such as local governments, the private sector (e.g. the recycling industry or biodiesel), local communities, and non-governmental organizations in developing elderly empowerment programs based on waste management. Conceptually, existing policy designs have not fully adopted a collaborative governance approach that is able to synergistically integrate various interests, resources, and capacities of actors. In this context, the concept of Collaborative Governance becomes relevant to explain and bridge these gaps. Emerson and Nabatchi (2015) define collaborative governance as the decision-making process and structure as well as the implementation of public policies that engage cross-sector actors constructively to achieve common goals that cannot be achieved unilaterally. This framework emphasizes three main dimensions, namely principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action, which simultaneously shape the dynamics of collaboration.

When associated with the function of the Ministry of Social Affairs, the collaborative governance approach requires the ministry to transform from just a program implementer to a metagovernor who is able to orchestrate collaboration between actors. In the context of empowering the elderly through the management of used cooking oil, the Ministry of Social Affairs needs to facilitate a space for interaction between the elderly as the subject of empowerment, local governments as technical implementers, the private sector as offtakers or market providers, and communities as social drivers. Without principled engagement, the program will run partially; Without shared motivation, actors' participation will be sporadic; and without the capacity for joint action, collaboration will not produce sustainable impact (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015).

Thus, there are clear similarities between factual and conceptual issues in this study. Factually, the weak integration of the elderly empowerment program and the lack of optimal use of used cooking oil indicate a failure of coordination across actors. Conceptually, this condition reflects the lack of internalization of the principles of collaborative governance in the design of social protection policies. Therefore, this study positions the design of policies for the empowerment of the elderly through the management of used cooking oil as an effort to operationalize collaborative governance within the framework of the tasks and functions of the Ministry of Social Affairs, so as to be able to produce policies that are not only responsive to the needs of the elderly, but also adaptive to the challenges of sustainable development.

METHOD

The research used a qualitative approach with literature study methods and conceptual analysis of circular economy-based empowerment policies and practices.

Studies on social protection for the elderly in Indonesia show the dominance of a social assistance-based approach that focuses on meeting basic needs through cash transfers and social services. The Tursilarini study (2015) emphasizes that social protection policies for the elderly are still oriented towards social security aspects and have not fully integrated the approach of economic empowerment. In line with that, various public administration studies show that the implementation of elderly welfare policies in the regions still faces institutional coordination constraints and limitations in program innovation (Akbar & Phahlevy, 2021). This

condition indicates that the social empowerment mandate carried out by the Ministry of Social Affairs has not been optimally operationalized in policy practice.

On the other hand, the literature on circular economy-based empowerment, especially used cooking oil management, has developed quite rapidly in recent years. Research by Bashith et al. (2022) shows that the processing of used cooking oil into value-added products is able to increase income and community participation. Nurwidiana et al. (2024) also emphasized that household waste-based innovations have the potential to support the circular economy while strengthening the economic resilience of communities. However, most of these studies still place the general public or women's groups as the main subjects, so they have not specifically examined the elderly as empowerment actors.

Meanwhile, in the realm of public governance, the concept of collaborative governance developed by Emerson and Nabatchi (2015) has been widely used to explain how cross-sector actors can collaborate in formulating and implementing public policies. This framework emphasizes the importance of principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action as prerequisites for successful collaboration. Other research by Ansell and Gash (2008) and Emerson et al. (2012) reinforces the argument that the complexity of public issues, including PR and social welfare, requires a collaborative approach involving government, the private sector, and civil society.

However, the integration between the study of elderly social protection, a circular economy based on household waste, and collaborative governance is still relatively limited. Most of the research is still partially standing: social protection studies focus on policy and institutional aspects, waste management studies focus on technical and economic aspects, while collaborative governance studies emphasize more on collaborative processes and dynamics without specifically linking them to the elderly and circular economy issues.

Based on the development of the literature, this study identifies a simultaneous gap between empirical (factual gap) and conceptual (conceptual gap) aspects. The social protection program for the elderly run by the Ministry of Social Affairs and local governments still does not integrate an empowerment approach based on local potential, especially the management of used cooking oil as part of the circular economy. This lack of integration shows that the elderly are still positioned as passive beneficiaries, not as productive actors with economic and social potential. In addition, a systematic cross-sector collaboration mechanism has not been built in managing this potential, so that various empowerment initiatives tend to be sporadic and unsustainable.

Conceptually, this gap reflects the lack of optimal application of collaborative governance principles in the design of social protection policies for the elderly. The Collaborative Governance framework requires integration between the process of interaction between actors (principled engagement), the formation of trust and shared commitment (shared motivation), and the strengthening of collective capacity (capacity for joint action). However, in the context of social protection policies for the elderly in Indonesia, these three dimensions have not been systematically articulated in policy design, especially those based on circular economy innovations such as used cooking oil management. Thus, there is a strong correspondence between factual problems and conceptual problems in this study. The weak integration of elderly empowerment programs and the lack of cross-sector collaboration factually reflect the absence of a collaborative governance framework in conceptual policy

formulation. Therefore, this research fills this gap by offering a policy design for the empowerment of the elderly through used cooking oil management based on the principles of collaborative governance, as well as strengthening the implementation of the duties and functions of the Ministry of Social Affairs in the field of social empowerment.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Presidential Regulation Number 88 of 2021 concerning the National Strategy for Aging (Stranas Ketuangan) was created to show seriousness and readiness in facing the ageing population phase, where from the central government to local governments can set the same steps to ensure that the elderly can remain independent, prosperous, and mature. In the regulation, the state provides targets in the form of: 1) increasing social protection, income security, and individual capacity; 2) improving the degree of health and quality of life of the elderly; 3) the development of an age-friendly community and environment; 4) strengthening the institution of the implementation of the aging program; 5) respect, protection, and fulfillment of the rights of the elderly. The five aging development targets can be elaborated more operationally through the design of elderly empowerment based on waste cooking oil management as an inclusive, sustainable, and community-based socio-economic innovation model. This approach not only addresses aspects of economic well-being, but also integrates the dimensions of health, environment, and collaborative governance.

In the Philippine context, the waste management sector, particularly e-waste, is dominated by informal networks involving more than 100,000 actors, which serve as the backbone of the national recycling system. Economic factors such as financial incentives (84.01%) and income level (82.86%) are the main determinants of participation in recycling activities, so that buy-back system-based programs and the formation of cooperatives have been proven to be able to improve the welfare of actors as well as the efficiency of the recycling system. In addition, an inclusive community-based approach, such as practice-based participatory training, is considered more effective because it is able to reach older and low-educated groups without creating structural exclusion (Kudhal et al., 2026). In addition, social counseling is often combined with skills training and strengthening employability skills (Arham & Nio, 2025). Work skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving with the community have a significant influence on an individual's work readiness. In addition, social support provided through the counseling process can also play a role in increasing participants' confidence and motivation.

The dominance of the charitable approach in social protection policies for the elderly shows that government intervention still focuses on providing cash assistance or other direct assistance. While this approach is important to meet basic needs, it tends to be short-term and does not touch the root of the problem of elderly vulnerability. Midgley (2014) explains that welfare models that are too socially assistance-oriented risk creating dependency and hindering individual capacity development. In the context of the elderly, this means that policies have not fully encouraged them to remain socially and economically active according to their abilities.

In contrast, the contemporary social welfare paradigm emphasizes an empowerment approach that integrates social protection with productive capacity building. This approach views the elderly as development subjects who still have potential, not just objects of

assistance. Research by HelpAge International (2020) shows that community-based elderly empowerment programs, such as skills training, micro business support, and strengthening social networks, are able to significantly improve the welfare of the elderly while reducing dependence on social assistance. In Indonesia, several studies have also found that the elderly who are involved in informal economic activities or community social activities tend to have a better quality of life (Suharto, 2017).

Furthermore, the integration between protection and empowerment is also in line with the social investment approach that emphasizes the importance of investing in individual capacity throughout the life cycle. Hemerijck (2018) emphasized that modern social policies need to be transformed from just a safety net to a springboard that encourages the active participation of the community, including the elderly. Social policy is an important instrument for the state in responding to changing societal needs and overcoming social problems such as poverty and inequality (Abakar et al., 2020). In this context, local governments have a strategic role to develop policy innovations that not only provide protection, but also open up space for the elderly to remain productive and contribute to socio-economic life.

However, the implementation of empowerment approaches at the regional level faces a number of challenges, including limited fiscal capacity, lack of trained human resources, and lack of coordination across sectors. Studies by Akbar and Phahlevy (2021) show that many regions do not yet have program designs based on the specific needs of the elderly, so the interventions carried out are often not on target. In addition, the weakness of integrated databases also hinders evidence-based policy planning. Meanwhile, in India, community-based waste management practices through informal sectors such as kabadiwalas show that more than 90% of e-waste management relies on these community networks, which work collectively in collecting and distributing waste from households (Sengupta et al., 2023). This system not only creates jobs for vulnerable groups, including the elderly, but also establishes a trust-based social structure between households and waste managers. In addition, it is estimated that there are more than 1.5 million informal sector workers in waste collection in India, demonstrating the scale of the economic contribution of such community-based systems (Plastics for Change, 2025).

Used cooking oil management not only represents economic opportunities, but also serves as a strategic medium to test the effectiveness of collaborative policy design. Used cooking oil as household waste has unique characteristics: it is large in volume, spread at the household level, and has economic value if managed properly. However, its use requires the involvement of various actors, ranging from households as waste producers, communities as collectors, the private sector as processors or offtakers, to the government as regulators and facilitators. Furthermore, the UNDP report confirms that vulnerable groups, including the elderly, have a strategic role in the circular economy, although their contributions are often not optimally institutionalized. The integration of social inclusion principles in policy design has been proven to open up wider participation opportunities and increase the economic and social benefits of waste management systems (UNDP, 2025).

Community-level practices in Southeast Asia also show that successful waste management is highly dependent on multi-stakeholder collaboration. A study in Thailand, for example, found that the success of community-based waste management programs is determined by simultaneous engagement between governments, the private sector, and

communities through a "house–temple–government–network" collaborative network model. This model not only increases the effectiveness of waste management, but also encourages the formation of community efforts and collective learning, including the active involvement of the elderly in recycling activities (Phuchinda & Wongchan, 2022). This complexity makes used cooking oil management an ideal arena to implement the Collaborative Governance framework.

The first dimension in the framework, namely principled engagement, emphasizes the importance of an inclusive, deliberative, and problem-solving interaction process. In the context of this research, the Ministry of Social Affairs needs to initiate a collaborative forum involving the elderly, local governments, business actors, and civil society organizations to formulate an empowerment program design based on used cooking oil management. The findings of the study show that the absence of structured dialogue spaces has led to program fragmentation and low participation rates among the elderly. By adopting principled engagement, policies are no longer formulated top-down, but through a co-creation process that allows each actor to convey their interests and contributions. Innovations in this dimension can be in the form of the formation of community-based collaborative platforms or the integration of waste bank programs with elderly empowerment schemes facilitated by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

In this case, the management of used cooking oil can be designed as a productive social protection scheme for the elderly, namely productive social protection. Local governments can facilitate the formation of elderly business groups or community-based cooperatives that manage the collection, filtering, and sale of used cooking oil to the biodiesel industry or derivative products (soaps, candles, etc.). In this context, the elderly are not only recipients of assistance, but also economic actors. The intervention design needed can be in the form of simple technical training, subsidies for production equipment (filters, hygienic containers), and a fixed purchase scheme (off-taker agreement) with the private sector. In other words, the Ministry of Social Affairs must facilitate starting from the establishment of routine forums (training, sharing sessions) attended by the state, the community (elderly), the private sector, academics and the media, for decision-making that the elderly need and want in the elderly empowerment program through the management of used cooking oil. Training of technical skills (hard skills) without being balanced with skills of social aspects (soft skills) such as cooperation, social adaptation, and communication is a weak point in human resource development programs (Succi et al., 2020). Coupled with the lack of integration between social and personal aspects (employability skills) with technical skills, it can lead to low job readiness of individuals (Santosa et al., 2023). In fact, the integration between soft skills and hard skills has been proven to contribute significantly to increasing work readiness, communication, critical thinking skills, and collaboration (Indartik & Husamah, 2025).

The second dimension, shared motivation, is related to building trust, commitment, and a sense of belonging among the actors involved. This study found that one of the main obstacles in the implementation of empowerment programs is low trust between actors, especially between the community and the government. The elderly are often positioned as policy objects, so their participation is passive and not sustainable. In the framework of collaborative governance, this condition shows the weakness of shared motivation that should be the foundation of collaboration. Therefore, policy innovation needs to be directed at strengthening

social relations through fair incentive mechanisms, transparency in program management, and recognition of the contribution of the elderly as productive actors. For example, results-based incentive schemes in the collection of used cooking oil can increase the motivation of the elderly to be actively involved, while strengthening their sense of belonging to the program. The Ministry of Social Affairs must involve various stakeholders such as training institutions, the private sector, the community, and the media in order to strengthen the implementation of the program, because this approach can increase social support and program effectiveness in a sustainable manner (Putnam, 2020).

This dimension is to increase understanding, with this empowerment, the elderly can improve the quality of life to a degree of health. Education to the elderly and the public regarding the dangers of using repeated used cooking oil for consumption (related to the risk of degenerative diseases). Social-productive activities involving the elderly have been shown to improve mental health, reduce social isolation, and prolong active ageing. Local governments can integrate this program with elderly posyandu services or health centers, so that there is synergy between health education, physical condition monitoring, and productive economic activities.

The third dimension, capacity for joint action, emphasizes the importance of collective capacity that includes resources, leadership, and supporting institutions to carry out collaboration effectively. The findings of the study show that limited capacity is one of the main factors that hinder the success of the elderly empowerment program. The elderly often face physical limitations and access to technology, while local governments have limited budgets and human resources. On the other hand, the private sector has technical and financial capacity, but it has not been optimally integrated in social programs. In this context, the Ministry of Social Affairs needs to play the role of a metagovernor who is able to orchestrate resources from various actors to build collective capacity. Innovations in this dimension can be in the form of technical training in used cooking oil processing for the elderly, the provision of waste collection infrastructure, and the development of partnerships with the recycling or biodiesel industry.

Community-based approaches and collaboration between stakeholders can increase the effectiveness and sustainability of development programs (Reed, 2021). Used cooking oil management encourages the formation of a cleaner and more sustainable environmental ecosystem. The elderly can act as agents of change at the RT/RW level in the campaign to collect used cooking oil from households. Program design can include the construction of an elderly-friendly collection point (easy access, safe, does not require high mobility), as well as a community-based incentive system. Thus, the environment not only becomes healthier (reducing water and soil pollution), but also more inclusive of the participation of the elderly. The success of this program is highly dependent on collaborative governance. Local governments need to build partnerships between social services, environmental agencies, cooperatives/MSMEs, the private sector (biodiesel processing industry), and civil society organizations. Institutionally, a network governance-based aging coordination unit or forum can be formed that integrates these various actors. The elderly also need to be involved as part of the organizational structure (for example in a cooperative for the elderly), so that they are not only policy objects but empowered subjects. Simple digitization (e.g. recording of the volume of oil collected, payment, and distribution) can also strengthen program accountability

and transparency. With active community involvement and synergy between actors, it can create a program environment that is more responsive to local needs and has a wider social impact. Plus, an approach that puts the community as the main subject involved in program planning, implementation, and evaluation can create a sense of ownership and sustainability of the program (Morelli et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the integration of these three dimensions results in collaborative dynamics that are able to answer the gap between factual and conceptual problems that have been identified previously. Factually, the low coverage of social assistance and the lack of empowerment of the elderly reflect the system's failure to reach and optimize the potential of these groups. Conceptually, this condition shows that the principles of collaborative governance have not been internalized in policy design. By adopting the framework of Emerson and Nabatchi (2015), this study offers an approach that not only answers empirical problems, but also enriches theoretical discourses on social policy governance in developing countries.

In addition, this discussion also emphasized that policy innovation cannot be separated from the existing institutional and regulatory context. The mandate of the Ministry of Social Affairs in the field of social empowerment provides strong legitimacy to develop collaboration-based programs. However, the implementation of the mandate requires a reinterpretation of the ministry's role from just a program implementer to a facilitator and orchestrator of collaboration. This transformation is in line with the concept of metagovernance, where the government plays a role in directing and coordinating interactions between actors without having to dominate the process.

From a comparative perspective, practice in several developing countries shows that integration between elderly empowerment and waste management can have a significant impact when supported by strong collaborative governance. For example, community-based programs in India and the Philippines show that the involvement of the elderly in recycling activities not only increases income, but also strengthens social cohesion and community participation. The success of the program is inseparable from the existence of a collaboration mechanism involving the government, the private sector, and the community in a synergistic manner. This reinforces the argument that collaborative governance is a relevant and applicable approach in the context of developing countries.

Thus, this discussion emphasized that the policy design for the empowerment of the elderly through the management of used cooking oil must integrate the dimensions of collaborative governance systematically. This approach not only increases the effectiveness of the program in the short term, but also creates an adaptive and sustainable system in the long term. Furthermore, the integration between social protection and the circular economy opens up opportunities to create added value that is not only economic, but also social and environmental.

Finally, this research makes an important contribution to the development of public policy science, especially in the context of social protection in developing countries. By linking empirical findings regarding the limitations of elderly social protection programs with the conceptual framework of collaborative governance, this study offers a new perspective that emphasizes the importance of collaboration-based policy innovation. In addition, this research also provides practical implications for the Ministry of Social Affairs and other stakeholders in

designing and implementing a more inclusive, participatory, and sustainable elderly empowerment program.

CONCLUSION

This study finds that the limited coverage of social protection for older adults in Indonesia stems not only from resource constraints but also from policy governance designs that fail to systematically integrate collaborative approaches. Although the Ministry of Social Affairs holds a strong normative mandate to promote elderly independence through social empowerment, implementation remains dominated by a charitable approach that positions older adults as passive beneficiaries, thereby limiting long-term welfare outcomes. The study also highlights that used cooking oil management within a circular economy framework holds significant potential as a sustainable empowerment instrument, yet remains underutilized due to weak cross-sector integration and insufficient collaboration mechanisms. These findings reveal a clear disconnect between practical challenges and the lack of internalization of Collaborative Governance principles in policy design. Future research should explore the development and testing of integrative governance models that incorporate multi-stakeholder collaboration and circular economy practices to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of elderly empowerment programs.

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