

# Strategies for Utilizing Village Funds to Improve Community Welfare in Cariu Village, Cariu District, Bogor Regency

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Poverty has become a problem in various regions, including in Cariu Village, with a rapid increase in 2022 due to a decline in household income caused by job losses, particularly in the health sector. This area is recorded as a stunting locus, proving that 14% of children experience growth and developmental issues due to chronic malnutrition. Community development and empowerment are greatly needed in situations like this, and Cariu Village has successfully reduced the poverty rate within just one year. Therefore, the researcher wants to understand how to utilize the funds owned by the village, especially village funds, to improve community welfare, as well as the factors that hinder the implementation of the strategy for using village funds to enhance the welfare of the village community, and what efforts are being made to improve the welfare of the village community. The method used is qualitative descriptive, with data collection techniques employing observations, interviews, and documentation, which are then validated using triangulation techniques to be summarized and presented, enabling conclusions to be drawn. The results of this study indicate the success of the strategy created and implemented by the Cariu Village Government in enhancing the welfare of the community as it successfully reduced the poverty rate from 2022 to 2023. By utilizing village funds, Cariu Village is able to facilitate the community in improving the quality of their lives, especially in the fields of development and empowerment, although in its implementation there are still many obstacles ranging from limited budgets, lack of communication and coordination, absence of motivation among officials, to journalists whose visits become a burden for the village government. However, from every obstacle that occurs, there is always a solution carried out, one of which is most often done weekly, namely morning assembly, then briefing of the staff and capacity building of village apparatus as a forum for evaluation, conducting transfers of staff to the dismissal of staff who are no longer effective in their work, as well as setting aside a small portion of the village's original income as a form of handling obstacles coming from the external scope.

**Keywords:** Village Fund, Poverty, Welfare

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## 1. Introduction

Welfare is the responsibility of a state. Within the constitutional system, it cannot be separated from the roles of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Government science is the study of how governance is carried out through administration (executive), regulation (legislative), leadership, and coordination between central and local governments, as well as between the government and its citizens, in various governmental events and phenomena in a proper and effective manner (Syafie, Kencana, 2014: 23). Government has functions of service delivery, development, empowerment, and regulation. If the government performs these functions effectively, it can be assumed that public services will promote justice, empowerment will foster independence, and development will create prosperity.

The lowest level of government administration is the village. A village is a legal community unit with territorial boundaries that possesses the authority to manage and regulate its own affairs in accordance with its original rights and local customs, as recognized within the national governance system and situated

within a regency area (Nurholic, 2021: 1). This understanding positions the village as an organization with the authority to govern and manage its community members. Village governance constitutes a subsystem of the regional government system. Through the autonomy granted to villages and village heads, authority and responsibilities are delegated by local governments to enable villages to administer and manage their own affairs.

Village development aims to improve the welfare of rural communities, enhance the quality of life, and alleviate poverty through the fulfillment of basic needs, the development of village infrastructure, the enhancement of local economic potential, and the sustainable utilization of natural and environmental resources. Village development encompasses planning, implementation, and supervision stages, emphasizing togetherness, kinship, and mutual cooperation to promote peace and social justice. In development activities, the government is obliged to function as both a regulator and a service provider (Rasyid, M., 1996: 37). Government activities should empower communities, provide services that meet public needs, and ensure equitable development. Development is carried out gradually and comprehensively with the objective of improving community welfare. However, in reality, many people remain underprivileged and continue to live below the poverty line.

According to the National Team for Poverty Reduction Programs (June 21, 2021) in the module on extreme poverty alleviation presented during a limited meeting on chronic poverty reduction strategies, various poverty alleviation programs have been implemented by the government, ranging from social assistance-based poverty reduction programs to community empowerment-based initiatives. Addressing poverty requires effective strategies, and all implementers and stakeholders have distinct roles and functions to maximize the achievement of poverty reduction targets.

The percentage of poor residents is measured based on the poverty line. The data indicate the number and percentage of poor people according to the poverty line. The decline in the number and percentage of poor residents in 2023 attracted the researcher's interest in examining the strategies implemented by the Bogor Regency Government to address poverty and identifying the obstacles that contributed to the increase in poverty between 2021 and 2022.

Among the 416 villages in Bogor Regency, Cariu Village is one of the villages located in Cariu District. Initially, Cariu District consisted of 20 villages. In 2004, the district was divided with the establishment of Tanjungsari District, leaving Cariu District with ten villages under its administration: Cariu, Babakanraden, Bantarkuning, Cibatutiga, Cikutamahi, Karyamekar, Kutamekar, Mekarwangi, Sukajadi, and Tegalpanjang. The district borders Bekasi Regency to the north, Karawang Regency to the east, Tanjungsari District to the south, and Jonggol District to the west. This study focuses on Cariu District, where the researcher obtained data from the Bogor Regency Community and Village Empowerment Office in the form of the Village Development Index (IDM) Data for 2021–2023 (Bogor, 2023), covering all villages in Bogor Regency, including Cariu Village.

Cariu Village is one of the most populous villages compared to other villages in Cariu District, with a total population of approximately 10,000 residents. It is recognized as the most densely populated village in the district and the only village classified as an independent village. Since its verification in 2019, Cariu Village has remained the sole independent-status village in Cariu District. However, despite its independent status, the village continued to experience an increase in poverty from 2021 to 2022. A region may be categorized as poor based on several characteristics: (1) low or no income, (2) lack of permanent employment, (3) low educational attainment or no education, (4) inadequate housing, and (5) failure to meet minimum nutritional standards.

Based on Village Development Index (IDM) data obtained from the Community and Village Empowerment Office, the number of poor families fluctuated significantly during the 2021–2023 period. In 2021, there were 1,050 poor families. This number increased dramatically in 2022 to 2,999 poor families, nearly three times the previous year's figure. This substantial increase indicates a rise in the economic vulnerability of the community and has become a serious concern for the government and other stakeholders.

Per capita income serves as an indicator and benchmark for measuring the welfare level of a population. The higher a country's per capita income, the more prosperous its citizens are considered to be. According to the Central Statistics Agency, the average per capita income in Bogor Regency was IDR 10,317 per capita per day in 2021, IDR 10,410 per capita per day in 2022, and IDR 10,860 per capita per day in 2023. Therefore, individuals whose daily per capita income falls below these averages may be categorized as poor. This condition may indicate unemployment or insufficient earnings, placing them below the average per capita income level.

Before Indonesia experienced the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of Village Funds in 2020 was primarily focused on implementing programs and activities related to village development and community empowerment. This was in accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration (Permendes PDT) No. 11 of 2019 concerning the Priority Use of Village Funds for 2020. However, after the outbreak of COVID-19, the priorities for Village Fund utilization changed. This shift began with the issuance of Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (PERPPU) No. 1 of 2020 concerning State Financial Policy and Financial System Stability for handling the COVID-19 pandemic. The use of Village Funds to combat the pandemic included the establishment of Village Volunteers Against COVID-19. Equally important was the allocation of Village Funds for Direct Cash Assistance (BLT-DD). The targets of BLT-DD were poor families who were not beneficiaries of the Family Hope Program (PKH) or Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT) and who had lost their livelihoods. In addition, beneficiaries included households not previously registered and those with family members suffering from chronic or prolonged illnesses.

Based on the phenomena described above, which serve as the background of this study, the researcher is interested in conducting research entitled "The Strategy for Utilizing Village Funds to Improve Community Welfare in Cariu Village, Cariu District, Bogor Regency." The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify, analyze, and describe the strategy for utilizing Village Funds in improving community welfare.
2. To identify, analyze, and describe the factors that hinder the implementation of Village Fund utilization strategies in improving village community welfare.
3. To identify, analyze, and describe the efforts undertaken to improve the welfare of village communities.

## 2. Methods

The researcher employed a descriptive method combined with a qualitative approach. According to Moleong (2011: 5), qualitative research is defined as "the collection of data in a natural setting conducted by individuals or researchers who are naturally interested in the phenomenon being studied." Based on the research title, the primary data source consisted of information obtained through interviews with stakeholders in Cariu Village regarding the implementation of strategies for utilizing Village Funds to improve community welfare in Cariu Village, Cariu District, Bogor Regency. Meanwhile, the secondary data sources included documents and regulations related to the village government's strategy for utilizing Village Funds to enhance community welfare in Cariu Village, Cariu District, Bogor Regency.

The researcher selected all informants from Cariu Village because villages possess autonomous rights, which may vary from one village to another. Consequently, the strategies examined in this study were specifically designed, formulated, and implemented by all elements within the village administration and community of Cariu Village.

In this study, data analysis techniques were based on the model proposed by Miles and Huberman (2007: 56). The researcher collected the necessary data through interviews and documentation. The collected data were then reduced and selected to ensure that the discussion remained focused on the research problems. Subsequently, the selected data were presented in the form of systematic descriptions and narratives to facilitate understanding. The final step involved drawing conclusions based on the findings that had been presented and analyzed.

### 3. Research Findings and Discussion

#### a. Strategy for Utilizing Village Funds to Improve Community Welfare

The success of Village Fund utilization in Cariu Village can be assessed by the extent to which implemented activities align with the plans that have been established and by the outcomes generated from these activities, both in terms of physical development, such as infrastructure and public facilities, and community empowerment initiatives. According to the Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration No. 16 of 2018, the priority use of Village Funds is directed toward village development and community empowerment, which include:

- a) The construction, development, and maintenance of infrastructure or physical facilities and public utilities that support livelihoods, including food security and residential areas;
- b) The construction, development, and maintenance of public health facilities and infrastructure;
- c) The construction, development, and maintenance of educational, social, and cultural facilities and infrastructure;
- d) Community empowerment programs.

The activities implemented through Village Funds provide numerous benefits to village communities, including improvements in quality of life, enhanced welfare, poverty reduction, and better public services at the village level. In this study, the researcher conducted visits to the Cariu Village Office to interview selected informants and collect relevant data, including information on various programs funded through Village Funds from 2021 to 2023. These programs covered several sectors, including village government administration, village development implementation, community guidance and development, village-based community empowerment, and disaster, emergency, and urgent response management.

Village government administration activities consist of expenditures related to fixed salaries, allowances, and operational costs of the village government; the provision of government facilities and infrastructure; population administration management; civil registration, statistics, and archival services; village governance administration; planning, financial management, and reporting; as well as land administration activities, such as certification of village-owned land, land and building tax (PBB) administration, determination and confirmation of village land boundaries, and other land-related affairs. Therefore, this sector encompasses all fundamental governmental functions within the village administration. In addition to these administrative activities, there are also various programs implemented under the village development sector.

#### b. Organizational Strategy

According to the findings of the observations conducted by the researcher, many village roads have been constructed by the village government. Nearly 95% of the village roads and neighborhood roads have been

developed. According to the Head of Planning Affairs of Cariu Village, "These roads are one of the priorities that must be addressed first because roads are the primary infrastructure development needed as access for all community members to reach workplaces, schools, healthcare facilities, and other destinations." Consistent with what the researcher observed, many alleyways and roads in Cariu Village have already been constructed and are suitable for use as access routes for the community to travel to their intended destinations. Therefore, considering the overall area and the large number of development programs that must be implemented, the Cariu Village Government selects and determines which activities should be prioritized by establishing a priority scale. This is because the essence of strategy lies in setting priorities, such as the construction, development, and maintenance of infrastructure and physical facilities that support livelihoods, including the improvement of village roads, farm roads (Jalan Usaha Tani/JUT), irrigation channels, as well as food security and settlement infrastructure. Furthermore, the development, enhancement, and maintenance of public health facilities and infrastructure include the construction of integrated health service posts (Posyandu) to provide health check-ups for community members, particularly infants and the elderly, while also focusing on addressing stunting through the provision of supplementary feeding programs (PMT), medicines, and educational support for mothers of toddlers. In addition, community empowerment is carried out through the construction of sports fields as facilities for community members to engage in physical exercise, maintain their physical fitness, and generate broader benefits for the community as a whole.

### c. Program Strategy

Based on the research findings, according to Posyandu cadres and the observations conducted by the researcher, the health facilities and infrastructure developed by the Cariu Village Government are considered adequate to support public health services for the village community. In addition, the benefits of the programs that have been implemented were explained by Mrs. Sopiah as follows:

The construction of roads has certainly been very helpful, especially for the people of Cariu Village. The development of these roads has made it easier for community members to carry out their daily activities and has improved access to schools, hospitals, and other destinations. Furthermore, road construction has also helped reduce the occurrence of accidents. Therefore, the benefits of road development clearly demonstrate its contribution to improving community welfare. In addition, the improvement of public facilities, such as the enhancement and maintenance of the volleyball court, has been extremely helpful and beneficial. Not only do the residents of Cariu Village benefit from the improvement and maintenance of the volleyball court, but people from outside the village also enjoy its advantages. For example, during the celebration of the anniversary of the Indonesian Teachers Association (PGRI), competitions are regularly organized, including volleyball tournaments. The volleyball court in Cariu Village is consistently used as the venue for these events. Through the maintenance of the volleyball court, visitors are able to exercise comfortably and maintain their health, which in turn contributes to improvements in living standards, per capita income, education, and health.

Mrs. Sopiah also expressed another opinion regarding the benefits of village road development in preventing accidents. Based on the field conditions observed by the researcher, the village roads and alleyways have been paved evenly with concrete by the Cariu Village Government. However, according to her, before these roads were constructed, they consisted of rocky surfaces and red soil. During the rainy season, these roads often became very slippery for motorcycles, and the presence of many sharp stones made them difficult and dangerous to traverse. In addition, a public volleyball court has been provided and is visibly crowded every afternoon, particularly with women who regularly play volleyball there. This positive activity undoubtedly contributes to public health, as exercise helps maintain physical fitness and reduces the likelihood of illness.

Therefore, it can be concluded that all programs implemented by the Cariu Village Government are intended to provide broad benefits for various segments of society, ranging from social assistance programs, local economic development, improvements in the quality of healthcare, and the development of adequate infrastructure. These efforts are expected to generate significant benefits and increase the overall level of welfare of the people of Cariu Village.

#### **d. Resource Support Strategy**

Behind the strategies that have been implemented and the involvement of various stakeholders, there are parties who play important roles in the execution of these programs. According to the Head of Social Welfare Affairs of Cariu Village, "The parties that play important roles in this strategy are the village government, village institutions, and the village community." Therefore, it can be stated that the parties mentioned by the Head of Social Welfare Affairs are those who are expected and required to participate in the implementation of the designated programs. Furthermore, according to the Secretary of Cariu Village, "The strategy for utilizing resources in Cariu Village cannot be separated from community proposals and the involvement of village institutions, which are consolidated through village deliberation meetings." In addition, regarding intervention in the health sector, a Community Empowerment Cadre (KPM) stated, "Yes, there is support from health center institutions, such as village midwives and nutritionists, as well as community members who serve as Posyandu cadres."

In addition to the participation of various stakeholders, the village government, which receives funding from both the central and regional governments, must carefully select and prioritize programs according to the available budget. According to the Secretary of Cariu Village:

"The allocation of the Cariu Village Government budget is based on the priorities stipulated in the regulations of the Ministry of Villages and the Ministry of Finance, as well as on community proposals outlined in the Village Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMDes) and the Village Government Work Plan (RKPDDes)."

Based on interviews conducted with several village heads and village secretaries, using various data collection techniques including interviews, observations, and supporting documents to ensure the validity of the findings, it can be concluded that budget allocation in Cariu Village is carried out in accordance with existing regulations, community proposals, and an assessment of the most urgent needs and priorities. Every village has different problems and needs because each village possesses its own unique social and cultural characteristics. Therefore, it is essential that all development activities be implemented based on clearly established priorities, which are subsequently incorporated into the RPJMDes and RKPDDes.

#### **e. Institutional Strategy**

Based on the research findings, within the institutional framework of the Cariu Village Government, every activity implemented is governed by regulations formulated in the form of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure the continuity and standardization of each activity. The autonomy granted to villages enables them to determine the direction of their development and sustainability. As the holder of executive authority, the Village Head is also responsible for all activities carried out within the scope of village governance.

Based on the interviews and observations conducted by the researcher in the field, it can be concluded that the strategy implemented by the Cariu Village Government is based on establishing priority scales according to various relevant considerations. These priorities are then realized through initiatives such as the development of village roads, neighborhood roads, and farm roads (Jalan Usaha Tani/JUT); the construction of village connecting bridges; the establishment of Posyandu facilities; supplementary feeding

programs; tertiary irrigation channels; the development of Lapangan Badak Putih (LBP) or Cariu Town Square as a center for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Cariu Village under the management of the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes); the provision of Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) for residents in need to help them meet their daily necessities; and environmentally friendly village programs aimed at environmental conservation and increasing public awareness of environmental protection.

Therefore, every program and activity implemented by the village government reflects a positive commitment to improving the sustainability of welfare for all members of the community. These activities are carried out under regulations formulated in the form of SOPs, which serve as standards for the implementation of each program and activity. Although challenges may arise during implementation in the field, the village government continuously strives to overcome such obstacles and achieve the welfare of all village residents.

### **Obstacles in the Strategy for Utilizing Village Funds to Improve Community Welfare**

Based on the research findings, communication and coordination are essential within an organization because communication among organizational members greatly determines the quality of the organization itself. It can also be said that the success or failure of an organization can be seen from the quality of communication among its members. Cariu Village is a governmental organization that directly interacts with the community and serves as a bridge between the local community, the regency government, and the central government. If the village government fails to perform its functions effectively, it is likely to create problems for both the regency and central governments, such as the delivery of inaccurate information. Furthermore, communication failures, as stated by the Village Secretary, have resulted in many tasks being delayed and even left unresolved. The researcher's field findings revealed that some members possessed an egoistic attitude, believing that they could complete tasks or activities without the involvement of other members. In reality, organizational activities are interconnected across different divisions, and this attitude contributed to communication breakdowns within the Cariu Village government organization.

In addition, a lack of motivation has caused village officials to become less active in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. Motivation is essential, at least from within oneself, because it enables individuals to perform their work with enthusiasm and satisfaction, making tasks feel easier to accomplish. There is a saying that if you first learn to love your work, you will find ease in doing it. The absence of motivation can be highly detrimental to an organization because it may lead to decreased productivity, as members tend to work less efficiently and produce fewer results. It can also result in poor work quality and create a negative work environment characterized by lethargy, apathy, and a lack of collaboration, ultimately reducing the morale of the entire team. More critically, unmotivated members may experience stress due to feelings of inadequacy in meeting job demands or because they feel trapped in roles they do not enjoy, which can eventually lead to burnout.

Another internal organizational issue is mindset. The indifferent mindset displayed by some village officials is similar to the egoistic attitude of members who believe they can complete tasks independently. However, in this case, the issue manifests differently: these members are reluctant to assist colleagues who have not yet completed their work, even when their own tasks have already been finished. They tend to think, "My task is my responsibility, and your task is yours." In reality, organizations require teamwork, where members support one another to ensure that all tasks are completed effectively and efficiently. According to the Chairperson of the Village Consultative Body (BPD) of Cariu Village:

"Many obstacles in the implementation process occur due to poor or careless planning, which ultimately leads to unsatisfactory results. In addition, proper monitoring and evaluation are necessary."

At the beginning of 2025, the Head of Cariu Village carried out a reassignment of village officials. According to him, there had been numerous internal issues within the organization. "Toward the end of 2024, I experienced a period of physical and mental exhaustion and was unable to fully supervise conditions at the village office. Due to the lack of monitoring, at the beginning of 2025 I discovered several irregularities in activities that had been carried out during the 2024 fiscal year without my direct supervision. In early 2025, I also received a warning from the local health center indicating that stunting rates in Cariu Village had increased again, a situation that had previously occurred in 2022. This became one of the findings during the maternal health class activities. What I had previously overlooked was that, after the replacement of the village finance officer, it was revealed that there had been a considerable budget allocation within the maternal health class program for providing additional supplements and nutritional support from the village as a stunting prevention measure. Due to my lack of oversight, these benefits were not properly distributed to the community in Cariu Village.

Furthermore, beyond my supervision, there was a failure in the lighting project at the Badak Putih Cariu town square. This project, which was handled by one of the village officials, did not meet my expectations and resulted in the need for repeated work in 2025."

Therefore, based on the interviews and field observations conducted by the researcher, the actual conditions in the field were not as smooth as planned or imagined. Numerous obstacles were encountered, as stated by the Village Head and the Head of the Service Section. These challenges can originate from both internal and external factors. Given the diversity of perspectives within the community, differences of opinion are inevitable. In addition, limited budget allocations mean that not all planned activities can be implemented simultaneously. Some projects must wait until the next fiscal year, which can create feelings of inequality and jealousy among community groups whose areas have already received development projects compared to those that have not yet benefited from such initiatives.

Apart from issues arising from the community, obstacles may also originate from the village administration itself. Low work motivation among some village officials has resulted in only a few individuals carrying most of the workload. This condition may also stem from inadequate preparation during the planning stage of activities. Any initiative that begins with thorough and careful preparation is more likely to achieve positive outcomes. However, even well-prepared activities require effective monitoring to ensure that implementation proceeds according to plan. Furthermore, evaluation at the final stage is necessary to improve and refine activities that have already been carried out.

In addition, challenges also come from external parties, such as certain non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and journalists who may pursue personal interests in relation to government programs. During field observations, the researcher found individuals claiming to be journalists whose media affiliations were unclear. Whenever government funds were disbursed, these individuals would arrive in groups seeking a share of the funds without conducting any reporting or news coverage, which are the primary responsibilities of journalists. This suggests the presence of individuals falsely claiming to be journalists in order to obtain personal benefits from government budget allocations distributed to the village.

In conclusion, the implementation of village fund programs, particularly development projects, faces a wide range of obstacles. These challenges originate from various sources, including internal issues within the village administration as well as interference from external parties seeking to influence or benefit from the programs.

## Efforts Undertaken in the Strategy for Utilizing Village Funds to Improve Community Welfare

In addressing the issues of inadequate communication, coordination, and motivation within the internal environment of the village government, several measures have been implemented, including the establishment of regular forums for information sharing through communication and coordination on a weekly and monthly basis. However, the researcher notes that the information conveyed during the morning assembly primarily represents one-way communication, as it mainly consists of announcements regarding activities planned for the upcoming week without providing opportunities for reciprocal discussion. Monthly briefing sessions are also conducted, and these meetings facilitate two-way communication. Nevertheless, the researcher observed that these briefings are held only once a month, meaning that discussions are generally limited to evaluating activities that have already been completed during the previous month. As a result, certain activities may have already concluded before any shortcomings are identified and addressed, potentially requiring additional time and effort for corrections. In the researcher's view, it would be more effective if briefings were conducted weekly, immediately following the morning assembly, to monitor the progress of ongoing activities. Such an approach would allow deficiencies to be identified and corrected while sufficient time remains, thereby improving work efficiency rather than extending the duration of implementation.

Based on the research findings, monitoring activities related to the Family Welfare Empowerment Program (PKK) has been challenging because the individual responsible also has professional commitments that limit the time available for involvement in village activities. However, several findings in the field have provided sufficient reasons for greater participation and attention to activities that require her involvement. With regard to pregnant women, one of the most important efforts in preventing stunting begins during pregnancy. Based on the researcher's own experience, when a fetus receives adequate nutrition and nourishment during pregnancy, the likelihood of a healthy birth is significantly increased. This includes favorable conditions such as a healthy baby, sufficient and clear amniotic fluid, and a healthy placenta that is neither attached abnormally nor wrapped around the baby. Even in high-risk deliveries, a healthy fetal condition can reduce the need for intensive medical care after birth.

However, during a discussion with the Chairperson of the Village PKK Mobilization Team (TPPKK), she explained:

“Efforts to combat stunting continue through the distribution of supplementary food to registered toddlers. Pregnant women have also begun receiving additional nutritional support. However, cases of stunting continue to exist. After conducting field observations, we found that even some registered families were not living in particularly poor conditions. Both parents were employed, and their homes were suitable for habitation, yet their children were still categorized as stunted according to village health post (Posyandu) records. This prompted me and the Village Head to question what factors were contributing to these cases. It turned out that inappropriate parenting practices were preventing children from growing according to their expected developmental stages. For example, during the distribution of supplementary food for stunting prevention, many children were brought by elderly grandmothers, while others were accompanied by caregivers because their mothers were working.”

The research findings indicate that stunting is not solely a matter of inadequate nutritional intake. Poor parenting practices also play a significant role. As explained by the Chairperson of the TPPKK, many children identified as stunted are primarily cared for by their grandmothers or by caregivers hired by their parents. Parenting provided by biological parents is often different from that provided by grandparents, and even more so from that of caregivers who may simply be neighbors rather than trained childcare providers.

Effective parenting is generally associated with better attention to children's nutritional and developmental needs. Therefore, parenting quality becomes an important factor influencing child growth and development.

Despite the various challenges and shortcomings that have occurred, the earliest stage of stunting prevention actually begins during pregnancy, when all of the baby's organs are forming and developing. For this reason, the village government's efforts to provide additional nutritional and dietary support to pregnant women represent an important initial step in preventing stunting in Cariu Village. In addition to the internal efforts undertaken by the Cariu Village Government, various measures have also been implemented to address obstacles arising from external parties.

#### 4. Conclusions

Based on the theoretical review and field data analysis regarding the utilization of village funds in Cariu Village, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Cariu Village has successfully reduced poverty levels compared to previous years. In formulating its development strategy, the village government prioritizes a scale of priorities by relying on effective communication and coordination. The implementation of village fund programs focuses on several key areas, including social assistance, infrastructure development, local economic development, improvements in healthcare quality, and environmental conservation, all aimed at enhancing community welfare.
2. Every organizational activity inevitably encounters obstacles, and Cariu Village is no exception. The challenges arise from both internal and external factors. Internally, limited financial resources combined with the need to distribute development evenly across numerous communities and areas have created feelings of inequality among different community groups. In addition, inadequate communication and coordination have contributed to rushed planning processes, insufficient monitoring and evaluation during implementation, and reduced effectiveness in program execution. Low levels of work motivation among village officials have also negatively affected organizational performance. Externally, the presence of certain non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and journalists whose involvement does not contribute positively to village development has become an additional burden for the village government.
3. Various solutions have been implemented to address these challenges. Among the most frequently applied measures are weekly morning assemblies, monthly staff briefings conducted during the first week of each month, and capacity-building programs for village officials that serve as evaluation and improvement mechanisms. The village government has also undertaken staff reassignments and, where necessary, terminated the employment of officials who were no longer performing effectively. Furthermore, a portion of the village's locally generated revenue has been allocated to address external challenges, with the expectation that these measures will facilitate the smooth implementation of programs designed to improve the welfare of the people of Cariu Village.

In relation to the implementation of both physical and non-physical village fund programs, the researcher proposes several recommendations for Cariu Village, particularly regarding the obstacles that have affected program implementation:

1. Community welfare should not be limited to infrastructure development and social assistance programs. Efforts should also focus on improving living standards through the creation of employment opportunities. This could be achieved by providing land and facilities for the utilization of local natural resources while employing local residents. During field observations, the researcher found that Cariu Village is well known for *Sonari worms*, which are traditionally used as a remedy for fever, typhoid, and similar illnesses. This local resource could be developed into a village-owned enterprise funded

through Village Funds and managed under the Village-Owned Enterprise (*BUMDes*). Such an initiative would not only create employment opportunities for local residents but also promote a unique characteristic and economic identity of Cariu Village.

2. The Village Government should strengthen internal institutions such as the Village Consultative Body (BPD), Community Empowerment Institution (LPM), and Youth Organization (Karang Taruna). These institutions should be actively involved in ensuring that village activities are implemented in accordance with the established strategies. Their involvement can help safeguard programs from individuals seeking to pursue personal interests. Practical measures may include maintaining attendance records at activity sites and conducting strict monitoring of participants. Individuals who are not directly involved in or related to the activities may be requested to leave the implementation area.
3. The Cariu Village Government should develop technological innovations to improve governance and transparency. One possible initiative is the creation of a digital application that provides transparent information regarding the stages and progress of village development activities. Such a platform should be accessible to all residents of Cariu Village and could be integrated into the village's official website or village information portal. This would enhance public access to information, increase accountability, and strengthen community participation in village development programs.

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