

## YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT IN IMBANAGARA VILLAGE, CIAMIS DISTRICT, CIAMIS REGENCY

Mel Asni Gustiani<sup>1)\*</sup>, Otong Husni Taufiq<sup>1)</sup>, R. Rindu Garvera<sup>1)</sup>

*Universitas Galuh Ciamis, Indonesia<sup>1)</sup>*

*Email : melasni26@gmail.com\**

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### Abstract

This study discusses the level of youth involvement in village development in Imbanagara Village, Ciamis District, Ciamis Regency. The research used a descriptive qualitative approach with a focus on the four dimensions of participation according to Cohen and Uphoff, namely decision making, implementation, receipt of benefits, and evaluation. The results showed that youth participation is still not optimal, as seen from the low participation in deliberation forums, the minimal role in the implementation of development activities, as well as limitations in experiencing benefits and involvement in the evaluation process. Obstacles found include the lack of youth awareness of their strategic role, apathy, and the lack of guidance and communication from the village government. Efforts that have been made include coaching through Karang Taruna, strengthening coordination between youth and village government, and adjusting the timing of activities so that they do not clash with the youth's busy schedules. This study recommends the importance of sustainable strategies to increase youth awareness and capacity in participatory village development.

**Keywords:** Participation, Youth, Village Development.

### A. INTRODUCTION

Villages have ancestral and traditional rights to regulate the interests of their communities, as stipulated in Law Number 3 of 2024 concerning Villages. The village government, along with the Village Consultative Body (BPD), plays a crucial role in managing governance and development at the local level in a democratic and participatory manner. Village development is the result of collaboration between the community and the village government, aimed at improving community welfare in the economic, social, political, and cultural fields. In this context, youth participation is crucial because they possess the energy, potential, and idealism that can support village progress (Prabowo & Handayani, 2024).

The role of youth is emphasized in Law Number 40 of 2009 concerning Youth, which states that youth have a strategic role in national development through awareness, empowerment, and self-development. In practice, this role can be realized through education, training, entrepreneurship, and active participation in local communities. At the village level, youth act as catalysts in driving social change and facilitating the implementation of development programs (Mr, 2017).

However, data in Imbanagara Village shows that the level of youth participation in the Karang Taruna organization is still low, which should be a forum for their involvement in development.

Table 1. Data on Youth in Imbanagara Village

Categori	Man	Woman	Amount
Youth of Imbanagara Village aged 16 - 40 years	1509	1442	2951
Karang Taruna members aged 16 - 40 years	12	5	17
Active Members of Karang Taruna 16 – 40 years old	9	3	12

Source: Imbinagara Village Office, 2025

The table above shows that out of a total of 2,951 youth, only 17 are members of the Youth Organization (Karang Taruna), and only 12 are active. This reflects a significant gap between the potential number of youth and their level of involvement in village development. This situation is exacerbated by the low representation of youth in decision-making processes, program implementation, benefit receipt, and evaluation, as explained in Cohen and Uphoff's participation theory.

Several previous studies conducted in other villages also indicate that common obstacles to youth participation include a lack of awareness, minimal guidance from the village government, and low motivation to actively participate (Hendri & Firdaus, 2024). Observations in Imbanagara Village also indicate that youth are more involved in recreational activities such as sports or celebrating national holidays, but they are not yet optimally involved in strategic development roles.

Based on the above issues, the researchers are interested in conducting a more in-depth study entitled "Youth Participation in Village Development in Imbanagara Village, Ciamis District, Ciamis Regency" to identify the extent of youth involvement, the obstacles they face, and strategies to maximize their participation.

## B. LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Concept of Participation

Participation is the involvement of individuals or groups in an activity, particularly in development. According to the Sociology Dictionary, participation means involvement in community activities outside of primary work, while according to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), participation means taking part (Amanda, 2023). Sumaryadi (2010) emphasizes that participation involves contributing resources such as time, energy, money, and ideas to development.

Histiraludin, in Helena (2014), states that participation is a form of active community involvement in every stage of an activity, as a means of strengthening relations between the community and the government. Cohen & Uphoff, in Dwiningrum (2015), define participation as active involvement in decision-making, program implementation, and evaluation. Hajar (2018) adds that participation encompasses the entire development process from beginning to end.

According to Sundariningrum in Sugiyah (2010), participation is divided into two:

- a. Direct: Individuals are directly involved in activities such as discussions or decision-making.
- b. Indirect: Involvement occurs through representatives.

Cohen & Uphoff (Dwiningrum, 2015) divides participation into four types:

- a. Decision-making: Youth propose ideas and determine the direction of development.
- b. Implementation: Youth are active in implementing activities and managing resources.
- c. Benefit-receiving: Youth receive the results of development programs.
- d. Evaluation: Youth assess and provide feedback on programs.
- e. Dusseldorp in Hajar (2018) explains the forms of participation, such as: become a group member, participate in discussions, encourage organizational activities, mobilize community resources, and utilize the results of activities.

Effendi, in Dwiningrum (2015), differentiates participation into: Vertical, where the community simply participates in programs initiated by external parties. Horizontal, where participation arises from the community's own initiative. Participation can also be classified based on the form of contribution: financial (money, scholarships), labor (voluntary service), infrastructure (provision of facilities), and moral (value/social support).

According to Homans, in Irving M. Zeitlin (Dwiningrum, 2015), participation relates to social behavior that arises from rewards or recognition. His theories include: the success proposition, the stimulus proposition, the value proposition, and the saturation proposition.

Barriers to youth participation include apathy, geographic and demographic factors, and economic constraints. According to Sastropoetro in Triatna (2022), successful participation is determined by five elements: communication, attitude change, awareness, voluntary will, and collective responsibility.

Cohen and Uphoff also emphasize two dimensions of participation: who participates (local residents, community leaders, village officials, or external parties) and how the participation process occurs. This is crucial in assessing the effectiveness of community engagement, particularly among youth.

### **Youth Concept**

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), youth is a young person. Law Number 40 of 2009 defines youth as Indonesian citizens aged 16–30 in a crucial phase of growth and development. Sudibyo, in Angkasawati (2018), states that youth, since the revolution, have always been present as drivers of social and political change. However, the characteristics of today's youth differ from those of previous generations.

In the context of village development, youth play a strategic role as agents of change, innovators, and drivers of social and economic activity. Arif, Khan, & Krisnawati (2021) detail the role of youth as follows:

1. Village Youth Organizations: Such as Karang Taruna (Taruna Youth Organization), young entrepreneur communities, and social groups. Their functions include: Training and capacity building, Collaboration with government and NGOs, Driving social activities in the village.
2. Real Contributions: Economic: Development of MSMEs, ecotourism, and digitalization of local products. Social: Volunteering in education and health programs. Environmental: Waste management and reforestation.
3. Prioritizing Village Interests: Actively participating in village deliberations, Developing social initiatives without seeking personal gain, Being a role model in responsibility and caring.

### **Village Development Concept**

According to Theresia (2014), development is a continuous effort to improve the quality of life. Riyadi, as cited in Theresia (2014), adds that development is a process of change aimed at achieving community well-being.

Based on Law Number 3 of 2024 concerning Villages, village development aims to:

- a. Improving community welfare by fulfilling basic needs.
- b. Building supporting infrastructure such as roads, irrigation, and public facilities.
- c. Developing the local economy by encouraging agriculture, small businesses, and job creation.
- d. Empowering communities to actively participate in the development process.
- e. Preserving the environment through the sustainable use of natural resources.
- f. Creating independent and prosperous villages, namely villages capable of autonomously managing their resources.

Supriatna (2000) emphasized that village development must prioritize the principles of equality, economic growth, and stability (Development Trilogy), as well as emphasize the balance between the roles of government and society, an integrated approach, and program sustainability.

### **C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research uses a qualitative approach aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of phenomena based on social and cultural phenomena in society (Adlini et al., 2022). According to Krik and Miller, qualitative research is a scientific tradition that observes humans in their context. Moleong (2016) states that this research aims to understand the subjects' behavior, motivations, actions, and perceptions holistically and naturally.

The method used is descriptive, representing data in the form of words and images, rather than numbers. This method was chosen so that researchers could comprehensively uncover youth participation in village development (Moleong, 2016).

#### **Data and Data Sources**

According to Subarsono (2010), data plays an important role in decision-making, situation analysis, and policy development. Data is differentiated based on:

1. There are two methods of data collection: Primary: obtained directly from sources through observation, interviews, and documentation. Secondary: derived from existing documents or references.
2. Data is of two types: Quantitative: in numerical form and measurable. Qualitative: descriptive and not numerically measurable.

Lofland and Lofland in Moleong (2016) emphasize that the primary sources in qualitative research are words and actions through direct interaction. Documents are also an important additional source of data.

#### **Data collection technique**

Referring to Wahyudin (2020), data collection techniques include:

1. Literature Study: Reviewing books and related scientific references.
2. Field Study through: Observation: Directly observing field conditions. Interviews: Directed conversations to gather in-depth information. Documentation: Collecting written documents, photographs, and other archives as evidence (Guba & Lincoln in Moleong, 2016).

#### **Data Analysis Techniques**

According to Patton in Moleong (2016), data analysis is carried out through:

1. Data Organization: Organizing data from interviews, observations, and documentation for easy access.
2. Categorization: Grouping data into specific categories.
3. Pattern Identification: Finding themes and trends in the data.

4. Conclusion Drawing: Formulating conclusions and verifying results to ensure accuracy and consistency.

## **D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

To find out youth participation in development in Imbanagara Village, Ciamis District, Ciamis Regency, the author conducted interviews with the Village, BPD, Community, Karang Taruna Chairperson, and Youth with reference to the dimensions according to Cohen and Uphoff in (Dwiningrum, 2015) which have 4 types of participation, namely:

1. Participation in decision-making
2. Participation in implementation
3. Participation in receiving benefits
4. Participation in evaluation

These dimensions can be described into several indicators, namely as follows:

### **Participation in Decision Making**

Participation in decision-making is the active involvement of individuals or groups in the process of formulating, considering, and establishing policies that affect the common good. In the context of village development, this participation is crucial to ensure that programs are implemented in accordance with community needs. Research in Imbanagara Village shows that youth involvement in development deliberations remains limited and symbolic. On average, only two to six representatives from the Youth Organization (Karang Taruna) are involved, with a focus on youth issues such as social activities and Ramadan bazaars. Factors influencing this involvement include the relevance of the deliberation topics, youth awareness, village government support, and the existence of open dialogue.

According to an interview with the Imbanagara Village Head, "Youth involvement in village development discussions is still limited, but we are continuously striving to provide greater space, especially through the Youth Organization (Karang Taruna). We usually invite them to village discussion forums, but sometimes their involvement is not optimal because the topics discussed are deemed less relevant to youth activities. Going forward, we will try to involve them more in the planning stage, not just the implementation."

This statement reinforces the fact that youth still tend to play a downstream role in the development process. Based on Cohen and Uphoff's theory, participation in decision-making includes community involvement in proposing ideas, designing alternative solutions, and determining the direction of development. However, field findings indicate that youth are more involved in the implementation phase, rather than in planning or strategic decision-making. Obstacles faced include minimal representation in village institutional structures, limited development information, and lingering doubts among village officials about the capacity of the Youth Organization (Karang Taruna). Despite this, youth demonstrate enthusiasm and a desire to contribute. In line with Histiraludin's theory, youth participation plays a crucial role in strengthening the relationship between the community and the government. Therefore, various efforts, such as youth training, providing inclusive spaces for aspirations, and improving communication, have been implemented to enable youth to be more active and strategic in the sustainable village development process.

### **Participation in Implementation**

Youth participation in village development decision-making in Imbanagara Village remains limited and tends to be formal. The youth involved are generally from the Youth Organization (Karang Taruna), with representatives ranging from two to six, depending on the relevance of the topic being discussed. This involvement occurs more frequently in activities directly related to youth, such as managing the heroes' cemetery, social activities, and the Ramadan bazaar. However, they are not yet fully involved in the village's strategic

planning or decision-making processes. Obstacles include limited representation within village structures, limited access to information, and the persistent perception that youth are not competent enough to be involved in important decision-making forums.

According to an interview with the Imbanagara Village Secretary, "Youth are often involved in village activities, but mostly only in implementation. For deliberations concerning strategic policies, they are rarely present or fully involved. We recognize this is a challenge, because their ideas are actually quite good and fresh, but they just need more facilitation."

This statement indicates that youth involvement is still partial and has not yet reached the core of the decision-making process. However, according to Sumaryadi (2010), true participation is real involvement in the entire process, from planning to implementation and evaluation of development programs. Meanwhile, Dusseldorp, in Hajar (2018), emphasized that ideal participation includes involvement in discussions, resource management, and utilization of development outcomes. Youth in Imbanagara Village actually possess great enthusiasm and potential, but their participation remains limited. Therefore, steps are needed, such as increasing youth capacity through training, expanding access to development information, and establishing a more open and accommodating deliberation forum for youth ideas. Thus, youth are not only the implementers of activities, but can also play an important role in directing village development in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

### **Participation in Receiving Benefits**

Youth participation in receiving development benefits in Imbanagara Village has shown relatively good results. Various development programs, such as the provision of sports facilities, creative spaces, and village economic activities, have had a tangible impact on youth, particularly those active in organizations like Karang Taruna. These benefits are not only physical, but also strengthen the social and economic aspects of youth. The level of benefit is greatly influenced by the intensity of youth involvement, the availability of supporting facilities, and the extent to which the village government and community provide space and support for their participation. This aligns with Sundariningrum's view in Sugiyah (2010), which distinguishes between direct and indirect participation—where in this context, youth demonstrate direct participation because they are involved and receive tangible benefits. When benefits are felt equitably, a sense of ownership of development outcomes develops, which is key to sustainability and increased participation in the future.

According to an interview with the Head of the Imbanagara Village Youth Organization (Karang Taruna), "Village development programs such as the provision of sports facilities, creative parks, and support for youth MSME activities have been quite helpful and beneficial. However, not all youth have access to these facilities to their full potential, especially those not affiliated with Karang Taruna. Moving forward, we hope for greater equity and broader involvement, not just within the management."

This statement emphasizes that although the benefits of development are felt by the majority of active members, there are gaps in access for youth outside the organizational structure. The research also shows that participation in receiving benefits is not fully equitable among village youth. Barriers such as limited resources, unequal distribution of benefits, and minimal youth involvement in decision-making also affect their level of satisfaction. From Effendi's perspective in Dwiningrum (2015), this reflects a form of vertical participation, where youth are mostly recipients of policies from above without equal involvement in program initiation. To lead to more ideal horizontal participation, more equitable guidance, information transparency, and the provision of broader and more inclusive participatory spaces are needed. Thus, participation in receiving benefits can truly reflect social justice and empowerment as proposed by Dusseldorp and Sumaryadi, namely

that participation must lead to increased capacity and independence of community groups—including youth.

### **Participation in Evaluation**

Youth participation in village development evaluation in Imbanagara Village has been facilitated through various mechanisms, both formal, such as Karang Taruna work meetings and village deliberations, and informal, through direct discussions and digital communication (Istiana, 2024). These forums provide a space for youth to provide input, criticism, and suggestions regarding program implementation. Based on interviews and observations, this mechanism is considered quite effective in accommodating youth aspirations in an open and responsive manner, although involvement is still dominated by Karang Taruna administrators. In this context, active youth participation aligns with Homans' theory as cited by Irving M. Zeitlin (Dwiningrum, 2015), which states that social behavior will continue if it results in valuable rewards, such as acceptance of suggestions or follow-up on input. This means that consistent youth involvement is a response to the form of social recognition they receive in the development evaluation process.

This is reinforced by the statement of one informant, the first youth representative, who said: "Criticism and suggestions from us youth are usually conveyed in forums such as Karang Taruna meetings or during village deliberations. Sometimes we also share them through WhatsApp groups if there are urgent matters. The village government is quite open to receiving input, although not all suggestions are immediately responded to. But at least we feel heard, and that keeps us motivated to stay involved."

However, youth involvement in evaluation is not yet fully optimal. Although evaluation forums are available and routinely utilized, evaluation results have not been fully incorporated into policies, and involvement is not evenly distributed across youth groups. Some youth are still not actively or directly involved in the evaluation process, and follow-up on submitted input has not been carried out comprehensively. This situation indicates the need to strengthen more inclusive engagement and more concrete feedback mechanisms. This aligns with the theory of Cohen and Uphoff in Dwiningrum (2015), which emphasizes that participation in evaluation includes community involvement in assessing program implementation as a whole to determine the extent to which program objectives have been achieved. Therefore, to ensure that youth participation truly impacts development direction, village governments need to expand their involvement, increase the transparency of the evaluation process, and follow up on evaluation results as an essential part of the village development cycle.

### **E. CONCLUSION**

Based on the research findings on Youth Participation in Village Development in Imbanagara Village, Ciamis District, Ciamis Regency, the study concluded that youth participation in village development is suboptimal and remains relatively low. This is demonstrated by the findings of several dimensions that have been optimally implemented, namely the dimension of participation in receiving benefits, indicated by the proposition that youth perceive positive benefits from various implemented development programs. The dimension of participation in evaluation, indicated by the mechanism for receiving youth input, was also optimal.

Obstacles encountered included the very small number of youth representatives involved (only two from the youth organization), limited space for expressing ideas and opinions, and the dominance of senior community leaders in deliberations. Lack of transparency regarding the village's activity agenda means that youth sometimes do not receive sufficient information

to participate from the outset. Village officials expressed doubts about the youth organization's capabilities in handling several important agendas. Furthermore, youth awareness and initiative to participate varied and were not evenly distributed among all members.

Efforts that must be made include increasing collaboration between Karang Taruna (Youth Organization) and village governments in development planning and implementation by inviting members to participate in village deliberations and activities. Creating more inclusive and youth-friendly discussion forums so that their ideas and aspirations are more widely heard. Providing training and outreach regarding the importance of youth participation in village development. Village governments are beginning to open wider spaces for youth contributions, both in formal and informal activities. Giving youth greater trust to be involved in strategic decision-making, not just in implementing activities.

Based on the research results, here are some suggestions that can be given to increase youth participation in village development in Imbanagara Village:

Efforts to enhance the role of youth in village development can be achieved through various strategic steps, including increasing youth involvement in decision-making by providing broader opportunities, such as increasing representation in village deliberations and establishing youth deliberation forums. Furthermore, strengthening youth organizations such as Karang Taruna through leadership training, organizational management, and skills development is necessary to optimize youth roles and participation. Village governments also need to conduct massive and innovative outreach to mobilize more youth to participate in village activities, considering that existing participation is not yet commensurate with their potential. Furthermore, equitable distribution of development benefits must be a priority, so that all youth in various hamlets, including those not affiliated with formal organizations, can benefit from development results. Finally, strengthening participatory evaluation is important by actively involving youth in the program monitoring and evaluation process, so that their input can become the basis for improving future development policies and programs.

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