

## **COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMUNITY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EARLY MARRIAGE PREVENTION POLICIES**

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### **Abstract**

*This study aims to analyze the form and effectiveness of collaboration between the government and the community in the implementation of early marriage prevention policies. The phenomenon of early marriage in Indonesia is still a complex social problem because it is related to economic, educational, cultural, and lack of legal awareness. The approach used in this study is qualitative descriptive, with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. The focus of the research is directed at how collaboration between the village government, the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), educational institutions, religious organizations, and community leaders is carried out in the context of the implementation of Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Marriage. The results of the study show that collaboration between the government and the community plays an important role in reducing the rate of early marriage. The village government functions as a policy facilitator, while the community, through the role of religious leaders and social organizations, becomes an agent of change in building legal and social awareness. However, the implementation of collaboration still faces obstacles in the form of limited resources, coordination between institutions that are not optimal, and cultural resistance to change. Overall, the success of early marriage prevention is largely determined by the extent to which collaboration between actors can run in a participatory, synergistic, and sustainable manner.*

**Keywords:** collaboration, government, society, public policy, prevention of early marriage.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Early marriage is still one of the most serious social problems in Indonesia. This phenomenon is not only related to legal aspects, but also concerns social, cultural, educational, and public health dimensions. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2023) reports that about 9% of women aged 20–24 years have been married before the age of 18. Despite a decline compared to a decade earlier, the figure is still far from the national target to eliminate child marriage by 2030.

Early marriage has a far-reaching impact on the lives of individuals and society. From the health aspect, UNICEF (2022) noted that girls who marry before the age of 18 are twice as likely to experience pregnancy complications and maternal death. From the aspect of education, early marriage causes school dropouts and reduces economic opportunities for the younger generation (Azizah, 2021). Meanwhile, from the social side, this practice strengthens the cycle of poverty and gender inequality (Nina, 2015).

To reduce the rate of early marriage, the Indonesian government has carried out legal policy reforms through Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, which sets the minimum age of marriage for men and women to be 19 years old. This policy aims to protect the rights of children and women and encourage the formation of quality families (Rosdalina, 2022). However, despite the regulations that have been implemented, the rate of early marriage in some areas, especially in rural areas, is still high. This shows that law enforcement is not enough without the active involvement of the community.

According to Winarno (2012), the implementation of public policy does not only depend on the government as the main implementer, but also requires the involvement of various non-government actors. In social contexts such as the prevention of early marriage, community participation is a crucial factor because cultural values and local norms are often stronger than formal legal rules. Therefore, the success of public policy requires collaboration between the government and the community in the form of coordinated and goal-oriented cooperation.

In modern public administration theory, collaboration is one of the important approaches in policy implementation, known as the Collaborative Governance Model. According to Ansell and Gash

(2008), collaboration in government is a process in which public and non-public actors are collectively involved in the decision-making process and implementation of public policies. This approach prioritizes the principles of participation, transparency, two-way communication, and shared responsibility.

Furthermore, Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012) define collaborative governance as a management framework that allows various stakeholders including government, civil society, religious organizations, and the private sector to work together constructively to solve complex public problems. Early marriage prevention is included in the category of complex public problems (*wicked problems*), because it is influenced by various factors such as tradition, economy, and education (Putri, 2023).

Thus, collaboration between the government and the community is not only a complementary strategy, but a strategic need in realizing policy effectiveness. The government cannot work alone without the support of the community, nor does the community need facilitation, regulation, and legitimacy from the government.

In local contexts in various regions of Indonesia, such as Banyuwangi, Bojonegoro, Balangan, and Sumenep, early marriage is still considered part of a social tradition that is difficult to change. Saidah and Hasbiyah (2024) show that public resistance to early marriage prevention policies arises due to the assumption that marrying children at a young age can protect against promiscuity or moral problems.

On the other hand, village governments often face limited human resources and funds in carrying out policy socialization. According to Nugroho (2018), the implementation of public policies at the local level is often hampered by weak bureaucratic capacity and low synergy between implementing agencies. Therefore, a collaboration mechanism is needed that allows synergy between the village government, the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), religious leaders, educators, and community organizations so that policies can be implemented effectively.

Research by Rummiyati et al. (2024) in Sumenep Regency found that the success of early marriage prevention programs increases when there is good coordination between local governments, educational institutions, and community organizations such as the PKK, Fatayat NU, and youth organizations. Meanwhile, Putri (2023) research in Bojonegoro proves that the Collaborative Governance model is able to create social innovations in the form of "Children's Forums" that actively educate adolescents about the dangers of early marriage.

Although normatively policies have been implemented, there is a gap between policy and social reality on the ground. Local and village governments have often conducted socialization, but the community has not fully understood or accepted the change in the marriage age limit. According to Azizah (2021), economic factors are still the dominant reason behind the practice of early marriage. Many families think that marrying off their daughters sooner can ease the family's economic burden.

In addition, Nina (2015) highlighted that low education and lack of access to information also strengthen the cycle of child marriage. In situations like this, the collaborative role between the government and the community becomes very important. The government must provide education and policy support, while the community needs to be actively involved as an agent of social change.

Community involvement also has a strategic value in creating social legitimacy for policies. As explained by Agustino (2016), public legitimacy towards policies will increase if the community feels part of the implementation process. Therefore, collaboration must be understood as an effort to build a *sense of ownership* of policy, not just symbolic involvement.

Based on theories and phenomena in the field, it can be concluded that the prevention of early marriage cannot be achieved only through legal and bureaucratic approaches. Collaborative synergy between the government and the community is needed in the form of sustainable and locally-based programs.

According to Ansell and Gash (2008), the success of collaboration is determined by four main factors: (1) trust building, (2) commitment to shared goals, (3) supporting institutional *capacity*, and (4) open communication process (face-to-face *dialogue*). In the context of preventing early marriage, these four elements can be applied through village forums, youth groups, and religious institutions that act as government partners.

The findings of Emerson and Nabatchi (2015) show that when collaboration is carried out in a participatory and trusting manner, the results of policy implementation are more sustainable. The

government is not only a regulator, but also a facilitator and catalyst for social change. The community also plays an active role as policy implementers and supervisors.

Thus, a collaborative approach can be an effective model in reducing the number of early marriages. This approach places the community as a subject, not just a policy object, and establishes an equal pattern of relationship between the government and citizens in the process of making and implementing public policies.

The novelty of this research lies in the government-community collaborative approach in the implementation of early marriage prevention policies, which combines the theory of Collaborative Governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008) and the implementation of public policies (Edwards III, 1980). Most previous research has focused more on the role of governments in policy implementation or partially examined the social impact of early marriage. This research is different because it places cross-actor cooperation as the main focus of the analysis, especially in the context of villages that have strong social and cultural norms.

In addition, this research seeks to bridge the gap between formal legal policy and social practice in society through a collaborative approach based on social participation and trust. This approach is expected to be able to produce a more adaptive and sustainable model of early marriage prevention policy implementation at the local level.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type of research. This approach was chosen to gain a deep understanding of the form of collaboration between the government and the community in the implementation of early marriage prevention policies based on Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Marriage. The location of the study was determined in Wongsorejo Village, Wongsorejo District, Banyuwangi Regency, which has strong social and cultural dynamics related to the practice of young marriage.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation studies. The research informants were selected by purposive sampling, including Village Heads, employees of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), community leaders, religious leaders, and representatives of women and youth organizations. Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model, which included three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn.

The validity of the data is maintained by triangulating sources and methods, to ensure the accuracy of information from various perspectives. This research is based on the theory of Collaborative Governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008) which emphasizes the importance of cooperation, communication, and trust between actors in the implementation of effective and sustainable public policies.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Research Results**

This study aims to describe the form and effectiveness of collaboration between the government and the community in the implementation of early marriage prevention policies in Wongsorejo Village, Wongsorejo District, Banyuwangi Regency. The analysis was conducted using the theory of Collaborative Governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008), which emphasizes four main elements: trust building, shared motivation, face-to-face dialogue, and *joint action*.

#### **1. Form of Government and Community Collaboration**

Based on the results of observations and interviews with a number of resource persons, collaboration between the village government, the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), and the community in Wongsorejo Village has been established through several real activities. The village government plays the role of the main facilitator of the policy, while the KUA is the technical implementer in providing marriage law education. Meanwhile, the community, especially religious leaders, teachers, and cadres of social organizations such as the PKK and Fatayat NU, play an active role in counseling and mentoring activities for adolescents.

As conveyed by Farid, an employee of KUA Wongsorejo:

"We work with the village government and religious leaders to provide counseling to schools and youth groups. The goal is for them to understand that getting married young is not a solution, but it can be a new problem." (*Interview with Farid, October 10, 2025*).

The activities carried out include the socialization of Law Number 16 of 2019, the establishment of the Village Youth Forum, and anti-early marriage campaigns through religious activities and non-formal education. The village government supports through village funds and coordination with local women's institutions.

## 2. Trust Building

The first element in collaboration is the building of trust between actors. Based on the results of an interview with Taufik, one of the community leaders, the relationship between the government and the community is quite good:

"We feel that the village government is open and willing to listen to the opinions of the community. In the past, policies were delivered in one direction. Now, we are involved in village meetings about early marriage prevention programs." (*Interview with Taufik, October 12, 2025*).

The statement shows an increase in public trust in the government. The participation of residents in village forums is proof that the two-way communication process has been running. According to the theory of Ansell and Gash (2008), trust is the main foundation in collaboration. In Wongsorejo, open and participatory relationships help reduce resistance to government policies, especially on sensitive issues such as the age limit for marriage.

## 3. Shared Motivation

Effective collaboration requires a common goal agreed upon by all parties. Based on the results of the interviews, both the village government and the community have the same motivation to prevent early marriage, although for different reasons. The government focuses on fulfilling national regulations, while the public sees it as an effort to protect the future of their children.

The Head of Wongsorejo Village said:

"We are aware that this *government regulation* is for the good of the residents. But the approach must be in accordance with the customs and values that apply in society."

These findings show that there is a synergy of interests that is the basis for collaboration. The government plays the role of a regulator, while the community becomes a social agent that encourages behavior change. According to Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012), the success of collaboration depends on the ability of actors to find common motivation and reduce differences in interests.

## 4. Face-to-Face Dialogue

Direct dialogue is an important element in maintaining productive collaboration. The village government routinely holds village deliberations (*musdes*) to discuss early marriage prevention programs. This activity involved village officials, KUA, school teachers, community leaders, and representatives of women's organizations.

The results of the observation show that the communication process takes place participatory and open. The public can submit complaints or suggestions related to the implementation of the policy. Through this dialogue, various local ideas emerged, such as the "Adolescent Alert Marriage" activity which provides education to junior and senior high school students about psychological and economic readiness before marriage.

These findings are consistent with the results of Putri (2023) research in Bojonegoro, which concluded that direct dialogue between policy actors is the key to the success of *Collaborative Governance* in sensitive social issues.

## 5. Joint Action

The collaboration between the government and the community in Wongsorejo resulted in some concrete actions. The village government and KUA work with schools to organize premarital guidance classes for adolescents, while community organizations provide assistance for families at high risk of marrying their children.

In addition, there is an activity "Child-Friendly Village Movement" coordinated by village officials with PKK and youth organizations. This program involves the active role of adolescents in disseminating education through social media and village activities.

Although various activities have been carried out, challenges remain. One of them is the limitation of human resources and budget, and there are still some people who view early marriage as a solution to economic problems. However, the joint efforts made showed significant progress in building social awareness.

## 6. Synthesis of Results

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the collaboration between the government and the community in Wongsorejo Village has been going well, although it still faces some obstacles. This collaboration reflects the principle of *Collaborative Governance* as stated by Ansell and Gash (2008), namely the interaction between parties who trust each other, share motivations, have direct dialogue, and take joint actions.

The village government plays the role of policy facilitator, KUA as the implementer of legal education, and the community as an agent of social change. The successful implementation of collaboration in Wongsorejo Village shows that the prevention of early marriage is more effective if it is carried out with a participatory approach and based on local values.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. The Importance of Collaboration in Policy Implementation

The results of the study show that collaboration between the government and the community is the main key to the successful implementation of the early marriage prevention policy in Wongsorejo Village. The village government and the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) have tried to involve the community through socialization activities, youth forums, and family assistance. The relationship pattern that is formed shows the characteristics of collaboration described by Ansell and Gash (2008), namely the involvement of various actors directly (*face-to-face interaction*), mutual trust (*trust building*), and shared motivation (*shared motivation*).

According to the theory of Collaborative Governance, effective collaboration is characterized by a two-way communication process and the commitment of all actors to achieve a common goal. In the context of Wongsorejo, the government plays not only the role of a regulator, but also a social facilitator, while the community becomes an active partner who participates in the formulation and implementation of policies. These findings support the results of Putri's (2023) research in Bojonegoro Regency which states that a collaborative approach in social policy is able to increase public awareness and reduce the rate of early marriage.

This shows that the implementation of public policies cannot be separated from the aspect of social participation. As stated by Edwards III (1980), the success of policy implementation depends not only on regulatory clarity, but also on the capacity of the implementation and the support of the community. Thus, synergy between the government and the community is a strategic factor that determines the effectiveness of policies at the grassroots level.

### 2. Trust Building

One of the important findings of this study is the increasing level of public trust in the village government. This process of building trust does not happen instantly, but through openness and consistent communication between the government, KUA, and community leaders.

According to Ansell and Gash (2008), *trust building* is a fundamental element in the *Collaborative Governance Framework*, as collaboration can only grow in a respectful and open environment. In the case of Wongsorejo, activities such as coordination meetings, village deliberative forums, and joint socialization have become a means of building direct communication that strengthens inter-stakeholder relations.

These findings are in line with the research of Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012) which emphasizes that trust between actors improves the efficiency of policy implementation because it reduces conflict and strengthens cross-agency coordination. People who feel valued and involved tend to support public policies more.

In addition, the results of Winarno's (2012) research also support that in the context of social policy, information disclosure and community participation are important elements to build policy legitimacy. In Wongsorejo, participatory communication processes have succeeded in increasing public acceptance of early marriage prevention policies, although they still face strong cultural value challenges.

### 3. Shared Motivation

The second important factor in collaboration is the shared motivation to achieve policy goals. Based on the results of the interviews, the government and the community have the same goal, namely to reduce the practice of early marriage. However, their motivations are different: the government is

oriented towards the implementation of the law, while society emphasizes on the moral protection and future of children.

This difference in orientation is not an obstacle, but complements each other. As Emerson & Nabatchi (2015) say, the success of collaboration should not be based on uniformity of views, but on a willingness to work together despite having different backgrounds of interests. In Wongsorejo, the shared motivation is manifested through educational activities such as premarital guidance classes, youth forums, and family counseling.

Rosdalina's research (2022) in Manado also found that collaboration based on common goals is able to strengthen public legal awareness. Meanwhile, Nugroho (2018) emphasized that mutual motivation is a binding factor in the complex network of public policy implementation. The findings in Wongsorejo show that the spirit of mutual cooperation and the religious values of the community are important foundations in building collaborative commitments.

#### 4. Face-to-Face Dialogue

Successful collaboration requires an open space for direct communication between the government and the public. In this study, the village government routinely holds village deliberations (*musdes*) and cross-institutional meetings to discuss the prevention of early marriage.

This kind of dialogue reflects the concept of *face-to-face dialogue* in the theory of Ansell and Gash (2008), which emphasizes the importance of face-to-face interaction as a means of building mutual understanding and trust. Through deliberation, the community has the opportunity to provide input, convey obstacles, and propose solutions.

These results are in line with research by Rummiyati et al. (2024) in Sumenep Regency which shows that direct dialogue between policy actors accelerates decision-making and strengthens a sense of shared responsibility. Meanwhile, Agustino (2016) emphasized that horizontal communication between policy actors at the local level is the main requirement to create participatory implementation.

However, on the other hand, limited human resources and time are obstacles for the village government in facilitating dialogue on a regular basis. As conveyed by Farid (an employee of KUA Wongsorejo), collaborative activities still depend on individual initiatives and have not been structured in the form of clear SOPs. This shows that even though communication is going well, institutional strengthening is still needed to make the collaboration process more sustainable.

#### 5. Joint Action

Concrete forms of collaboration in Wongsorejo Village can be seen in the implementation of various early marriage prevention programs, such as legal counseling, the establishment of the Village Youth Forum, and the "Child-Friendly Village" campaign. This activity is a manifestation of *joint action*, which is a collective action carried out by various parties to achieve a common goal (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

The village government provides administrative and budgetary support, KUA provides religious and legal education, while community organizations such as the PKK and Fatayat NU are involved in youth assistance. This form of collaboration is similar to the results of Putri's (2023) research in Bojonegoro, which found that the success of child marriage prevention collaboration is greatly influenced by the active participation of local communities and institutions.

In addition, Saidah and Hasbiyah (2024) emphasized that joint action in the implementation of public policies must be supported by adaptive and flexible institutional designs. In the context of Wongsorejo, coordination between institutions is going well, but it is still informal. Therefore, a formal cooperation mechanism is needed so that collaboration has a legal basis and long-term sustainability.

#### 6. Challenges and Barriers to Collaboration

Although the collaboration went well, the study found a number of obstacles that hindered its effectiveness. First, limited human resources and budget are still the main problems. This condition is similar to the findings of Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) who explained that policy implementation often fails due to lack of supporting resources. Second, cultural resistance to change is also an obstacle. Some people still view early marriage as a solution to social and economic problems.

Research by Azizah (2021) and Nina (2015) shows that local economic and cultural factors are the two main causes of the difficulty in eliminating the practice of early marriage in rural areas. Therefore, the government needs to take a more cultural and persuasive approach, not just legalistic.

Third, coordination between institutions has not been fully integrated. This shows the need for cross-sectoral policy support, such as education, health, and social, to ensure the sustainability of the program. As suggested by Emerson & Nabatchi (2015), collaboration is more effective if it is supported by *a clear institutional design* and participatory evaluation mechanisms.

Comparison Synthesis with relevant References as follows:

Yes	Researcher / Year	Focus of Findings	Relevance to Research Results
1	Ansell & Gash (2008)	Collaborative Governance Theory	Become the main model; Wongsorejo's collaboration according to the four elements of the theory
2	Emerson et al. (2012)	Integrative Framework for Collaboration	Interaction between parties with open communication
3	Emerson & Nabatchi (2015)	Governance Regimes	Institutional design is needed for sustainable collaboration
4	Edwards III (1980)	Policy Implementation	Collaboration strengthens communication factors & disposition
5	Winarno (2012)	Public participation in implementation	There has been an increase in the social legitimacy of the policy
6	Agustino (2016)	Coordination between actors at the local level	Horizontal communication is effective but unstructured
7	Princess (2023)	Collaborative Governance in Bojonegoro	In line: the role of society is important in prevention
8	Rosdalina (2022)	Socialization of the Marriage Law in Manado	Same: communication is the main challenge
9	Azizah (2021)	Economic factors in early marriage	Relevant: the dominant economic reasons in Wongsorejo
10	Rummiyati et al. (2024)	Collaboration with local organizations in Sumenep	Same: collaboration increases policy effectiveness

Based on the results and comparison of literature, it can be concluded that the collaboration between the government and the community in Wongsorejo Village has been effective even though it has not been optimal. This collaboration reflects the application *of the principles of Collaborative Governance*, namely participation, communication, trust, and collective action.

The government plays the role of policy facilitator, the community as an agent of social change, and religious institutions as moral mediators. The factor of mutual trust and motivation is the main strength, while the main obstacle lies in the limitation of resources and the absence of a formal institutional design.

This study reinforces the findings of Ansell and Gash (2008) and Emerson & Nabatchi (2015) that collaboration is the most effective approach to dealing with complex social issues such as early marriage. Through participatory and local value-based collaboration, public policies can be more adaptive, sustainable, and accepted by the community.

**Conclusion**

This study concludes that collaboration between the government and the community is a key factor in the successful implementation of early marriage prevention policies at the village level. Based on the results of research in Wongsorejo Village, Wongsorejo District, Banyuwangi Regency, it was found that the implementation of the policy of Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Marriage cannot run effectively without the active involvement of the community as a government partner.

First, from the aspect of trust building, the collaboration between the village government, the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), and the community shows an increase in more open and participatory relationships. Public trust in the government grows along with information disclosure and citizen involvement in the planning process and implementation of early marriage prevention programs.

Second, in terms of shared motivation, both the government and the community have a common goal, which is to protect the younger generation from the negative impact of early marriage. Although the reasons and approaches are different—the government emphasizes the regulatory aspect, while the community emphasizes moral and religious values—the synergy between the two is a strong basis for the implementation of sustainable policies.

Third, face-to-face dialogue has proven effective in strengthening mutual understanding and reducing misunderstandings. Through village deliberations, youth forums, and socialization activities, the government has succeeded in creating an inclusive dialogue space between officials, religious leaders, educators, and residents.

Fourth, joint action is tangible evidence of the success of collaboration. Programs such as legal counseling, premarital guidance, and the "Child-Friendly Village" campaign show that cross-agency cooperation can produce activities that have a direct impact on the community.

However, this study also found several obstacles, including limited human resources and funds, the absence of formal Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for collaboration, and the still strong cultural values that support the practice of early marriage. These factors need to receive further attention so that collaboration can run more optimally.

Overall, the results of this study prove that the Collaborative Governance approach (Ansell & Gash, 2008) is a relevant and effective implementive strategy in social issues such as the prevention of early marriage. Participatory, trust-based, and common interest-oriented collaboration has been proven to be able to build legal awareness and change people's social behavior towards a more constructive and gender-equitable direction.

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