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Village Prior Learning Recognition (RPL) Program as an Effort to Realize Sustainable Development in Bojonegoro Regency

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Objective: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process that acknowledges individual learning achievements gained through formal, non-formal, and informal education, as well as work experience. As a government initiative aligned with UNESCO's mission of "Lifelong Learning," RPL serves as a foundation for continuing formal education or equating achievements with specific qualifications. This study aims to examine how the RPL program, implemented by the Bojonegoro Regency Government under the Ministry of Villages, Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration policy, contributes to sustainable development - focusing on key village stakeholders, including Village Heads, Village Apparatus, and local activists. Method: This research employs a literature review approach, analyzing various relevant documents, regulations, and previous studies to understand the implementation and impact of the RPL program in Bojonegoro District. Results: Findings reveal that the Village RPL Program in Bojonegoro is a strategic effort that significantly supports sustainable development. The program has successfully enhanced human resource competencies, empowered local economies, improved governance at the village level, and encouraged environmental conservation practices in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Novelty: This study highlights the innovative application of the RPL framework in rural development policy, emphasizing how recognizing informal and non-formal learning achievements can become a transformative tool for grassroots empowerment and sustainable village development.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is one of the global priorities that aims to ensure a balance between economic growth, social welfare, and environmental sustainability (Andin, 2024). In Indonesia, the implementation of sustainable development often faces challenges, especially in rural areas. Bojonegoro Regency, recognized as both an agricultural and oil and gas producer, faces development dynamics that necessitate an inclusive approach grounded in local potential. Villages in this district play a strategic role in supporting sustainable development; however, limited human resource (HR) capacity is often a significant obstacle.

Educational progress is one of the key challenges for the government and is a primary focus that must be considered. Often, educational problems are the cause of the difficulty for regions to progress and develop. Therefore, the government is obliged to provide support to improve educational progress (Rempe, 2023). Not only at the lowest level of education, the government is obliged to support education up to the level of higher education in order to accelerate development. Another concern for the government is the quality of human resources. Especially human resources in villages. This affects the acceleration of development, both economically, educationally, culturally, and civically. Most of the causes of the hampered progress of human resources are related to education. There are still many rural communities that have not had the opportunity to pursue higher education. People often prefer to continue working because they are unable to pursue higher education due to various reasons (Susanto, 2021).

The government needs to provide educational assistance as a means of addressing these issues and demonstrating its commitment to minimizing them. The acceleration of development in villages will be more optimal if supported by various educational service facilities, extending up to higher education levels. Villages, as centers of progress with various programs and policies, are important to receive integrated direction from the government in order to achieve progress and prosperity. In the process of accelerating development and empowering communities in villages, the government has initiated a scholarship program for individuals with work experience to obtain academic equivalency for their work experience through the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration (Kemendes PDTT). The program implemented by Kemendes PDTT is the Village Prior Learning Recognition (RPL Desa), which serves as a form of equivalency for various human resources in the village, including village heads, village officials, village assistants, administrators of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDesa), and BUMDesa (Ali, 2024). This joint learning program can be compared to lecture material at universities with various study programs, enabling students to obtain an academic degree of Bachelor (S1), Master (S2), or Doctor (S3).

In Chapter I, Article 1 of the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 41 of 2021, it is explained that Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process of recognizing a person's learning achievements obtained through formal, non-formal, informal education, or work experience. This recognition serves as a basis for continuing formal education or to equate these achievements with specific qualifications. (Nasir, 2022). In addition, as stipulated in Article 4, Paragraph 3 of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System of the Republic of Indonesia, education is implemented as a lifelong process of acculturation and empowerment of learners. In its implementation, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is divided into two forms: RPL to continue formal education and RPL to equate learning achievements with specific qualifications (Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation, 2021). The Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 41 of 2021 concerning Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) demonstrates the government's commitment to supporting lifelong learning. As part of UNESCO's mission to promote the right of every individual to access education. "Lifelong Learning". With this program, it is expected to accelerate development and improve the quality of human resources in the village. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to start with the influential human resources in the village, namely the village head, village apparatus, and village activists.

Bojonegoro Regency was appointed as the first region to implement the Village RPL program with 2 (two) State Universities (PTN), namely Yogyakarta State University (UNY) and Surabaya State University (UNESA). Each village has the opportunity to register up to 4 (four) village officials to participate in the Village RPL program (Alifa, 2024). This program began in March 2022 and was enthusiastically welcomed by the Regent of Bojonegoro, who had previously also realized several scholarship programs, namely 1 (one) village, 2 (two) bachelor's scholarships, scientist scholarships, and final year scholarships. This program was also enthusiastically welcomed by village officials

throughout Bojonegoro Regency, as evidenced by the 998 participants from the Village Government apparatus who participated in the RPL program.

Participants in the Village RPL program in the Bojonegoro Regency area, who are at the S-1 level, undertake a 2-year study period (comprising four semesters) through a process that recognizes their expertise and experience in village community development and empowerment. Not only stopping at the S-1 level, the Bojonegoro Regency Government, which is considered successful in implementing this Village RPL Program, continues to the S-2 level. The universities involved in this Village RPL Postgraduate program are Sebelas Maret University (UNS) and Brawijaya University (UB) (Mustofa, 2024). The existence of educational policies implemented by the government through the Ministry of Villages, Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration, which the Bojonegoro Regency Government has adopted, represents one form of local government effort to accelerate development in the village. This writing refers to the process of implementing policies to ensure they run smoothly and are beneficial for the sustainability of life and the welfare of the community in Bojonegoro Regency.

RESEARCH METHOD

In analyzing the Village Prior Learning Recognition Program (RPL) in Bojonegoro Regency, the author uses a qualitative approach to explore the implementation of policies in Bojonegoro Regency and the objectives that have been set. The data sources used are secondary data obtained through a literature study approach. Data sources are obtained through information mining, including previous research, articles, news, and other public library sources. The keywords used to obtain research references are "Village Prior Learning Recognition Program (RPL)" and "RPL Village Bojonegoro Regency," with publication limits from 2020 to 2024.

Reference sources for writing from news publications by the Public Relations of the Ministry of Villages, Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration in 2022 regarding the objectives of the Village RPL program. News publications by the Bojonegoro Regency Government in 2022 discuss the targets of the Village RPL Program and plans to advance the program to the S-2 level. News publications by the Department of Community and Village Empowerment of Bojonegoro Regency in 2023, namely the preevaluation of the implementation of the Village RPL program in Bojonegoro Regency. The results of previous research, published in 2023, discussed the Implementation of the Village RPL Program for Village Apparatus in Bojonegoro Regency, as well as the standards and objectives of the policy.

The author collects data by reading, understanding, and studying through media that provide information related to the problem being studied. Data is taken from the General background of research, general background of research, the general background of research, the general background of research official government and university websites. The analysis of the implementation of this policy is based on three main components of the policy process that can be used as analysis targets according to Leslie A Pal (1992), namely Policy Determinants (Policy Strength), Policy Content (Policy Content), and Policy Impact (Policy Impact). In previous research sources, few

have analyzed the implementation of this program. Therefore, this study will discuss relevant theories, making it valuable reading material and increasing knowledge.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of the literature study related to the Village Prior Learning Recognition Program (RPL) as an Effort to Realize Sustainable Development in Bojonegoro Regency are in Table 1.

Table 1. Article literature study

Article Title

Performance Analysis of Village
Apparatus Employees
Receiving Prior Learning
Recognition Scholarships
(Mustofa, 2024)

Socialization of the Prior Learning Recognition (RPL) Program for Employees in Several Locations in Aceh Province (Saputra, 2023)

Socialization of the Prior Learning Recognition (RPL) Education System in the Sorong City Government

Public Policy in the Field of Higher Education in Relation to the Implementation of Recognition of Past Experience (RPL) (Mulyani, 2024)

Human Resource Quality Improvement: Prior Learning Recognition Program Maintains Quality With Quality-Based Technical Instructions. (Safar, 2024) The analysis results showed a significant increase in employee performance after receiving the prior learning recognition scholarship, with an average performance score increase of 20% (p < 0.05). Factors that contributed to the increase in performance included the application of new knowledge in daily work, increased self-confidence, and skills acquired through prior education and training. Socialization activities are beneficial, and it is reassuring to know that there are educational programs that recognize learning achievements. These achievements can be formal, as evidenced by the candidate's educational background, or informal, as demonstrated by the candidate's nonformal education and work experience.

Contents

The socialization of the Prior Learning Recognition (RPL) Education System in the Sorong City Government is a positive step toward more inclusive and results-oriented education. With full support from various parties, it is hoped that RPL can be an effective solution in optimizing educational potential in Sorong City.

Public policy in higher education plays a crucial role in regulating the direction and policies of learning in educational institutions. The importance of implementing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is increasingly being recognized. RPL enables students to gain recognition for knowledge and skills acquired through experiences outside formal education, accelerate their learning, and provide fairness to those with relevant prior experience.

This socialization leads to the establishment of quality control conditions in the implementation of new student admissions through the Prior Learning Recognition pathway, encompassing document readiness and university readiness in terms of human resources, facilities, and internal and external quality assurance conditions.

The strong basis for the Prior Learning Recognition Program (RPL) policy is in Table 2.

Table 2. Relevance foundation to RPL

No	Foundation	Relevance
1.	Regulation of the Minister of	One form of implementation of the Indonesian
	Research, Technology and Higher	National Qualifications Framework (KKNI) is
	Education of the Republic of	based on the mutual recognition of learning
	Indonesia Number 26 of 2016	achievements obtained by a person through
	concerning Recognition of Prior	various educational pathways and types.
	Learning (RPL).	
2.	Regulation of the Minister of	The government is committed to supporting
	Education, Culture, Research,	lifelong learning. UNESCO's mission is to
	and Technology Number 41 of	promote the right of every individual to receive
	2021 concerning Recognition of	education. "Lifelong learning".
	Prior Learning (RPL).	
3.	Presidential Regulation of the	The legal basis for the government through the
	Republic of Indonesia Number 8	Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and
	of 2012 concerning the	Technology to implement the RPL program.
	Indonesian National	
	Qualifications Framework.	
4.	State Gazette of the Republic of	The legal basis for the government through the
	Indonesia Number 24, Year 2012	Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and
_	December of the Minister of	Technology to implement the RPL program.
5.	Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 3	The legal basis for the government through the
	of 2020 concerning National	Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology to implement the RPL program.
	Standards for Higher Education	rectinology to implement the Ki L program.
6.	Regulation of the Director	Technical Instructions for Implementing Past
0.	General of Higher Education,	Education in Higher Education Institutions that
	Research and Technology	Provide Academic Education.
	Number 162/E/KPT/2022, 2022	Trovide readeline Eddedion.
7.	Regulation of the Minister of	Purpose of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
	Education and Culture of the	
	Republic of Indonesia Number 73	
	of 2013 (Implementation of	
	KKNU),	
	·	

Discussion

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Village is a recognition of learning achievements obtained from both formal and non-formal or informal education and/or work experience in formal education. This program was initiated by the Ministry of Villages, Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration in collaboration with State Universities for Villages (Pertides) and has been implemented in Bojonegoro Regency since 2022. It is known that Bojonegoro Regency is the first region to implement this program. Village Heads, Village Apparatus, Village Deliberative Body, Village Professional Companions, BUMDes Administrators, and other Village activists as participants in the implementation of the Village RPL Program. The existence of a policy for implementing this program certainly has specific intentions or objectives to be achieved. In this study, the author identified and analyzed three main components of the Village RPL Program policy process in Bojonegoro Regency according to Leslie A Pal (1992) as follows:

1. Policy Determinants (Policy power)

The RPL program has a clear legal basis, as outlined in Permendikbudristek Number 41 of 2021 and Law Number 20 of 2003, which concerns the National Education System. This legal basis provides legitimacy for the implementation of RPL, ensuring that the policy has operational references by national regulations. This facilitates coordination between the central, regional, and village governments in implementing the program (Mulyani, 2024). RPL supports the concept of lifelong learning, which is relevant to development challenges in rural areas. Recognition of non-formal and informal experiences and learning allows village communities to gain access to education and training without having to start from scratch. This provides opportunities for increasing the capacity of human resources in villages, which are the main pillars of sustainable development.

The forces responsible for shaping policies or programs can be viewed from several perspectives. In the implementation of this Village RPL Program, the key strength that emerged was the cooperation between the government and educational institutions to provide opportunities for improving human resources in the village. The collaboration is in line with the mission of higher education institutions, which are expenced to play a significant role in education, research, and community involvement to have a direct impact on their surrounding communities (Tauran et al., 2024).

The existing potential will be developed to increase productivity and competence. The government's commitment to supporting this program is also significant in helping to accelerate the achievement of its goals. In addition, educational institutions that cooperate in implementing this program also serve as supporting forces, contributing to a form of community service. The implementation of the Village RPL program in Bojonegoro Regency, during the first period, involved collaboration with two state universities: Surabaya State University (UNESA) and Yogyakarta State University (UNY). In the second period, specifically at the S-2 level, we collaborated with Brawijaya University (UB) and Sebelas Maret University (UNS). As the program implementer, the Bojonegoro Regency Government, through the Community and Village Empowerment Service, has coordinated with all villages in the Bojonegoro Regency area and provided a quota of four people for each village. The Bojonegoro Regency Government provides full support in the form of Education scholarships to all participants of the Village RPL Program, allowing them to pursue education free of charge. National policy support is also one of the key forces because the Village RPL Program aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize aspects of quality Education, poverty alleviation, and reduction of inequality.

2. Content Policy (Policy content)

The contents of the Village RPL policy underscore the main objective, which is to provide official recognition for learning achievements obtained through formal, non-formal, and informal channels, as well as work experience. With RPL, access to education can be increased. Village communities, which often have limited access to formal education, can obtain certification through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) channel. This policy aims to empower communities by rewarding their skills, which supports productivity and economic competitiveness. This policy accommodates groups that were previously difficult to reach by the formal

education system, such as women, the elderly, and the economically disadvantaged.

The Village RPL Policy categorizes the program into two main types: RPL for Continuing Formal Education and RPL for Qualification Equivalency (Permendikbudristek, 2021). RPL for Continuing Formal Education Provides recognition of learning achievements as a basis for continuing formal education at a higher level. Encourage village communities to improve their formal education qualifications that are relevant to the needs of village development. In RPL, the equalization of qualifications for recognizing skills and work experience of village communities is achieved through specific qualifications. Increasing employment opportunities for rural communities through official recognition of their skills.

3. Policy Impact (Policy impact)

The Village Prior Learning Recognition Program (RPL) Policy in Bojonegoro Regency has a significant impact on sustainable development in various aspects, both socially, economically, and environmentally. The impact of increasing the capacity of human resources (HR) is the recognition of local competence. By recognizing the skills acquired by village communities through work experience or non-formal learning, this policy helps increase the capacity of HR without requiring lengthy formal education (Irwan, 2019). Moreover, the involvement of higher education institutions in implementing the Village RPL program demonstrates the tangible contribution of academia to empowering rural communities. The Village RPL program reflects the higher education institutions: teaching, research, and community involvement by allowing access to education based on the recognition of prior work experience and informal learning (Tauran et al., 2024). Additionally, it offers broader educational opportunities. The RPL policy opens access to education for community groups that were previously unable to continue their education, such as people with low incomes, women, and the elderly. This increases educational inclusion in the village. In addition, recognition of their skills encourages people to be more confident in contributing to village development and the job market.

From an economic perspective, RPL increases the competitiveness of rural communities in the labor market through official certification, which also encourages local economic empowerment. Additionally, this program enhances the productivity of the village workforce and creates entrepreneurial opportunities, particularly in sectors aligned with local wisdom (Mulyani, 2024). Socially, this program helps reduce inequality by providing equal opportunities for skills recognition, increasing community participation in development, and strengthening social harmony through appreciation of community contributions.

The environmental impact of the RPL policy is also important. The program can recognize natural resource conservation-based skills, such as waste management or environmentally friendly agricultural practices, which support the principles of sustainable development (Andin, 2024). In addition, strengthening local wisdom through RPL helps maintain the sustainability of the village environment. In village governance, this program enhances local government capacity, promotes inclusive development planning, and ensures the effective use of village funds for human resource development. The success of policy implementation at the village level greatly depends on the presence of community based institutions capable of facilitating, coordinating, and executing government programs. Similar findings

were observed in the case og Indonesian migrant workers in Hong Kong, where regional communities have played key roles as facilitator and implementers helping members navigate bureaucratic processes and ensuring effective policy communication (Eprilianto et al., 2024). In the Village RPL context, village officials and local actors serve similar functions, helping to translate national education policies into locally relevant action and support.

This policy directly supports the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequality), and SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities). However, challenges such as limited infrastructure, a lack of public understanding of the benefits of RPL, and the need for consistent funding must be addressed to ensure the sustainability of this program. By optimizing the potential of the RPL policy, Bojonegoro Regency has an excellent opportunity to empower rural communities and realize inclusive and sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding: The Village Prior Learning Recognition (RPL) Program in Bojonegoro Regency demonstrates a strategic policy framework that makes a meaningful contribution to sustainable development. By recognizing learning achievements from formal, non-formal, and informal education, as well as work experience, the program enhances inclusivity and fosters community empowerment. Its structured mechanisms and alignment with local needs make it a powerful tool for village-level transformation. Implication: The implementation of RPL has significant implications for rural development policy. It not only strengthens human resource capacity and governance at the grassroots level but also supports economic empowerment and environmental sustainability, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As such, RPL can be a model for other regions seeking inclusive and participatory development strategies. Limitation: Despite its strengths, the program faces several limitations, including inadequate infrastructure, limited financial resources, and varying levels of stakeholder readiness and understanding. These barriers may hinder the program's full realization of its potential if not addressed through collaborative efforts and sustained support. Future Research: Further research is necessary to assess the long-term effects of the RPL program on individual and community development. Comparative studies across different regions could help identify best practices and develop more effective implementation models. Additionally, action research involving direct community engagement could offer deeper insights into the transformative effects of RPL at the village level.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Apriva Azbihardiyanti: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft, Visualization, Supervision, Validation, Writing – Review & Editing, Project Administration. Author have read and approved the final version of this manuscript.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare no known financial conflicts of interest or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this manuscript.

DECLARATION OF ETHICS

The authors declare that the research and writing of this manuscript adhere to ethical standards of research and publication, in accordance with scientific principles, and are free from plagiarism.

DECLARATION OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

The authors declare that generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) and other AI-assisted tools were used prudently, not excessively, during the research and preparation of this manuscript. Specifically, ChatGPT was used for brainstorming ideas, structuring paragraphs, and refining academic language; Grammarly for grammar and style correction; and ChatPDF for extracting key points and summarizing reference articles. All AI-generated material was reviewed and edited for accuracy, completeness, and compliance with ethical and scholarly standards. The authors accept full responsibility for the final content of the manuscript.

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