

# Implementation of the Human Development Index Improvement Program in North Kalimantan Province

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**Abstract.** *This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of human development policy implementation in North Kalimantan Province using Merilee S. Grindle's (1980) implementation model, which emphasizes two main aspects, namely policy content and implementation context. This study uses a qualitative approach involving various stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Human Development Index (HDI) improvement program. The results show that human development policies in North Kalimantan have become a top priority for the local government, Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) and supported by regional regulations in the fields of education and health. The implementation of this policy shows positive progress with an increase in the HDI from 71.01 in 2020 to 72.10 in 2024. However, its effectiveness is not yet optimal because it still faces various obstacles such as limited human resources, weak cross-sectoral coordination, interregional disparities, and unequal access to basic services in rural and border areas. Analysis based on the Grindle model shows that the success of the policy is greatly influenced by the ability of local governments to adaptively manage social, economic, and institutional dynamics. Thus, strengthening bureaucratic capacity, inter-agency synergy, and equitable access to education, health, and economic services are important steps to accelerate the improvement of human development quality in North Kalimantan Province.*

**Keywords:** *Policy Implementation, Human Development Index, North Kalimantan*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Human Development Index (HDI) is one of the main indicators used to measure the success of development in a region (Ghislandi et al., 2018; Dasic et al., 2020). The HDI reflects the average achievement of three basic dimensions of human development, namely education, health, and economy. According to Sofilda et al. (2015) Although Indonesia's national HDI score has continued to increase from year to year, disparities between regions remain quite high, especially between provinces in western and eastern Indonesia. One province that still faces serious challenges in improving its HDI is North Kalimantan Province, which until recent years was still in the group of provinces with an HDI below the national average.

Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2023), North Kalimantan's HDI reached around 72.66, still below the national HDI of around 74.39. Regional disparities are also still quite striking, with urban areas such as Tarakan City showing higher HDI achievements than

border areas such as Nunukan, Malinau, or Tana Tidung. The main problems faced include low average length of schooling (RLS) and expected length of schooling (HLS) in the education sector, limited health facilities and personnel in rural areas, and low purchasing power due to economic disparities between regions.

In addition, the vast geographical conditions of North Kalimantan, with its border characteristics and most of its areas being inland, have resulted in limited access to basic services. Another challenge arises from limited human resources, infrastructure, and cross-sector coordination in the implementation of development programs (Afionis et al., 2020). This has resulted in policies designed to improve the HDI not being fully implemented effectively. Therefore, the effectiveness of human development policy implementation in North Kalimantan is an important issue that needs to be examined in greater depth.

To overcome these challenges, the North Kalimantan Provincial Government has established a number of strategic policies and regional regulations that directly support efforts to improve the HDI. Among them is North Kalimantan Provincial Regulation No. 2 of 2017 concerning Health Services, which affirms the local government's commitment to creating a healthy, independent, and equitable society through improved access to and quality of basic health services. In addition, there is North Kalimantan Provincial Regulation No. 6 of 2023 concerning Education, which serves as the legal basis for efforts to equalize access to education, improve the quality of learning, and strengthen the capacity of educators throughout the province.

These two regulations directly support two of the three main dimensions that make up the HDI, namely education and health. Human development policies are also reflected in the North Kalimantan Province Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD), which places improving the quality of human resources as one of the main priorities of regional development. The RPJMD carries the vision of "Transformation towards a developed, prosperous, and sustainable North Kalimantan," with a strategic mission that emphasizes inclusive and equitable social transformation, sustainable economic transformation, and collaborative and innovative governance transformation.

Through this RPJMD, the regional government aims to increase the Human Development Index (HDI) through cross-sectoral synergy, with a focus on improving access to education, health services, and community economic empowerment. At the district/city level, similar policies are also regulated in the Regional Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPD) of each region, such as Nunukan and Malinau Regencies, which explicitly place the development of superior human resources as one of the priority policy directions.

This approach strengthens efforts to improve the HDI at the regional level through programs based on local needs, such as improving the quality of basic education, empowering the economy of border communities, and strengthening health services in remote areas (Huazheva et al., 2024). Human development policies and data in North Kalimantan show positive progress. Based on data from the North Kalimantan Central Statistics Agency (2024), the province's HDI increased to 73.41, up 0.53 points from the previous year.

This increase reflects improvements in all dimensions of the HDI (Jin et al., 2020; Yumashev et al., 2020). However, this achievement still falls short of the national average, indicating that there are still gaps in the implementation of human development policies in the field. When discussing policy implementation, this stage is a crucial part of the public policy process because it determines the extent to which policy objectives can be achieved in practice. According to Pressman & Wildavsky (1973) and Wamsler et al. (2020), implementation is a complex process involving interactions between various actors, organizations, procedures, and techniques aimed at translating policy decisions into concrete actions.

In this framework, implementation is not merely a matter of following rules, but a dynamic process that requires coordination, communication, and adaptation to constantly

changing social, economic, and political conditions (Miceli et al., 2021; Obrenovic et al., 2020; Ansell et al., 2023). In other words, well-designed public policies will not yield optimal results if they are not followed by effective, efficient, and contextual implementation. Several experts offer different views on how policy implementation should be understood. Van & Van (1975) define implementation as actions taken by individuals or groups both within and outside the government to achieve the objectives set out in policy decisions.

According to them, implementation is influenced by several variables such as policy standards and objectives, resources, characteristics of the implementing organization, inter-organizational communication, the attitudes of implementers, and economic, social, and political conditions (Kosasih et al., 2023; Pahrudin et al., 2022). This model emphasizes the importance of internal bureaucratic factors in determining the effectiveness of policy implementation. Meanwhile, Linder & Peters (1989) place implementation as a process between policy formulation and the results achieved.

They highlight the role of legal structures, social conditions, and the commitment of implementers in determining the success of implementation. In their view, public policy cannot be separated from the interaction between policymakers, implementers, and the communities targeted by the policy. Thus, implementation is a political-administrative process that requires the adaptive capacity of policy implementers to respond to the dynamics of the external environment (Mwesigwa, 2021).

In contrast to this more technocratic approach, Pandey (2002) offers a more contextual and realistic model of policy implementation, particularly for developing countries. According to Grindle, the success of policy implementation is largely determined by two main variables, namely the content of policy and the context of implementation. The first variable includes the interests affected, the types of benefits generated, the degree of change expected, the location of decision-making, program implementers, and the resources used.

The second variable relates to the socio-political and institutional environment, such as the power and strategies of the actors involved, the characteristics of the implementing agencies, the level of public compliance, and the economic and political conditions surrounding policy implementation (Adebayo et al., 2023; Onyango, 2020). In the context of North Kalimantan, the application of the Grindle model is highly relevant for understanding the effectiveness of human development policy implementation. In terms of policy content, the local government has established strategic programs in the fields of education, health, and economy, such as increasing the Average Length of Schooling (RLS) and Expected Length of Schooling (HLS), improving community nutrition, and strengthening local economic growth through support for MSMEs and improving workforce skills.

Meanwhile, in terms of the implementation context, the success of the program is greatly influenced by the capacity of the implementing agencies (Regional Apparatus Organizations/OPD), budget support, cross-sector coordination, and community and business participation. Furthermore, the challenging geographical conditions of North Kalimantan and the limitations of basic infrastructure mean that the implementation of human development policies depends not only on program design, but also on the ability of local governments to manage the social, economic, and political contexts in an adaptive manner.

Grindle emphasizes that public policies will only be successful if they are supported by a conducive institutional and socio-political context. Thus, the application of Grindle's model allows for a more in-depth analysis of the extent to which policies to improve the HDI in North Kalimantan can be effectively implemented through the integration of policy substance and factual conditions in the field. Therefore, Grindle's theory is considered the most appropriate for analyzing the implementation of Human Development Index improvement in North Kalimantan Province.

## **METHODS**

The sources in this study are all relevant stakeholders involved in the Human Development Index Improvement Program in North Kalimantan Province. In this study, the researcher used a qualitative research method in collecting data related to the management of the implementation of the Human Development Index Improvement Program in North Kalimantan Province.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the study show that human development policies in North Kalimantan Province have become one of the top priorities in the regional development agenda. The North Kalimantan Provincial Government has set the direction for human development policies through the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD), with a focus on improving the quality of competitive human resources. This policy is reinforced by several legal bases, including Regional Regulation No. 6 of 2023 concerning the Implementation of Education and Regional Regulation No. 2 of 2017 concerning the Implementation of Health, which serve as the legal umbrella for efforts to improve the HDI in the region. The implementation of this policy involves various regional agencies such as Bappeda, the Education and Culture Office, the Health Office, and the Social Office, which collaborate in managing programs to improve the quality of education, improve community nutrition, and empower the community economically. However, cross-sectoral coordination has not been fully effective due to differences in priorities and limited human resources in each regional agency (OPD).

Analysis based on Ansari et al. (2022) implementation model shows that the effectiveness of policy implementation in North Kalimantan is greatly influenced by two main aspects, namely policy content and implementation context. In terms of policy content, the substance of human development policies has included clear targets, such as increasing School Expectancy (HLS), Average Length of Schooling (RLS), reducing stunting rates, and increasing per capita income. However, the equitable distribution of program benefits still faces challenges, especially in remote and border areas such as Krayan and Sebatik, which are difficult to reach due to geographical conditions and limited infrastructure. Government-designed programs, such as educational scholarships, job skills training, and micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) development, do provide direct benefits, but they have not been able to reach all segments of society equally.

The resources supporting these policies come mainly from the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD) and the Special Allocation Fund (DAK) from the central government. However, most of the budget allocation is still focused on physical infrastructure development, so that the aspect of human resource capacity building has not received proportional attention. In addition, the monitoring and evaluation (Monev) system is not yet digitally integrated, which has an impact on the weak supervision of program achievements in the field. Limited capacity of implementers at the district/city level is also an obstacle in ensuring the effectiveness of policy implementation. Meanwhile, in terms of implementation context, the study found that social, economic, and political dynamics greatly influence the success of human development policies. Socially, the people of North Kalimantan are diverse in terms of ethnicity and culture, which affects their level of acceptance of government programs.

Economically, most people still depend on primary sectors such as agriculture and fisheries for their livelihoods, limiting their access to education and health services. Political stability in the region is relatively well maintained, but leadership changes often cause shifts in policy priorities, resulting in suboptimal program continuity. Inter-regional institutional capacity is also uneven. The city of Tarakan has adequate apparatus and institutional facilities, while areas such as Nunukan and Malinau still experience a shortage of technical personnel and supporting facilities. In remote areas, cross-sector coordination still depends on provincial government initiatives because a strong institutional governance system has not yet been established at the

district/city level. In addition, the level of community participation in human development programs also shows significant variation.

In urban areas, communities tend to be more responsive to government programs, while in rural areas the level of participation is still low due to a lack of information and literacy. Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the implementation of human development policies in North Kalimantan Province is quite effective but not yet optimal. Substantively, the policies have been designed comprehensively with a focus on improving the quality of education, health, and the economy of the community. However, in terms of implementation, limited resources, weak cross-sectoral coordination, and regional disparities remain major obstacles. The progress of the HDI from 71.01 (2020) to 72.10 (2024) does show positive results, but the equitable distribution of achievements between regions remains a major challenge for local governments.

Chindarkar et al. (2017) implementation model has proven relevant in explaining this condition because it highlights the relationship between policy substance and the socio-political context that influences the effectiveness of policy implementation in the region. Grindle's approach helps identify that the success of human development policy implementation in North Kalimantan depends not only on good policy design, but also on the ability of local governments to adaptively manage social, economic, and institutional dynamics. Therefore, strengthening cross-sectoral coordination, increasing the capacity of the local bureaucracy, and expanding access to basic services in border and remote areas are important steps to accelerate the improvement of human development quality in North Kalimantan Province.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that human development policies in North Kalimantan Province have shown a clear and planned direction through RPJMD document and regulatory support in the fields of education and health. Its implementation involves various regional institutions and shows positive progress in improving the HDI, although it is not yet evenly distributed throughout the region. Based on Merilee S. Grindle's implementation model, the effectiveness of this policy is greatly influenced by the comprehensive content of the policy and the implementation context, which still faces structural constraints, such as limited human resources, weak cross-sectoral coordination, and regional disparities. The increase in HDI indicates partial success, but the equitable distribution of development outcomes remains a major challenge. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen inter-agency coordination, increase regional institutional capacity, and equalize access to basic services in remote and border areas so that human development policies in North Kalimantan can run more optimally and sustainably.

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