

Policy Implementation of the Socio-Economic Empowerment Program (PPSE) in Supporting Social Assistance Graduation

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Abstract. The Social-Economic Empowerment Program (Program Pemberdayaan Sosial Ekonomi / PPSE) is an empowerment-based program designed to support the graduation and economic independence of Beneficiary Families (Keluarga Penerima Manfaat / KPM). Program implementation at the local level constitutes an important factor in determining program success, particularly in relation to social assistance, coordination among implementers, and the readiness of beneficiaries. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Socio-Economic Empowerment Program (PPSE) in supporting beneficiaries' graduation from social assistance and promoting their economic self-reliance in Sleman Regency. The study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design through in-depth interviews and documentation studies involving program implementers and beneficiaries. The analysis adopted a policy implementation perspective emphasizing the interaction between policy content and implementation context in program execution. The findings indicate that PPSE implementation in Sleman Regency has generally been effective through business assistance, social facilitation, and intergovernmental coordination across administrative levels. Social facilitators play an important role in supporting business sustainability, strengthening beneficiary motivation, and facilitating business development. In addition, coordination among the central, provincial, and district governments has contributed to the implementation of the program at the local level. This study contributes to the policy implementation literature by highlighting how local implementation capacity and intergovernmental coordination shape the effectiveness of graduation-oriented empowerment programs. This study recommends strengthening the empowerment-oriented mindset approach through the involvement of social counselors, community leaders, and graduated KPM beneficiaries as motivators in supporting beneficiaries' mental readiness and economic independence.

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INTRODUCTION

Poverty alleviation is no longer viewed solely as an effort to provide consumptive social assistance, but is also directed at strengthening community economic independence through a socio-economic empowerment approach. Developments in social welfare policies indicate a shift toward a more developmental approach to social protection, integrated with productive interventions (Barrientos & Hulme, 2009). This approach has evolved through economic inclusion or cash plus schemes, which combine social assistance with productive business assistance, training, and continuous mentoring (Roelen et al., 2017). From this perspective, empowerment is not only oriented toward meeting short-term needs but also toward strengthening community capabilities, assets, and access to achieve more sustainable prosperity.

Within the framework of national social protection and security, the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, through regular social assistance programs such as the Family Hope Program (PKH) and the Staple Food Program, has reached tens of millions of Beneficiary Families (KPM). In line with efforts to transform social assistance toward economic empowerment, the Ministry of Social Affairs developed the Socio-Economic Empowerment Program (PPSE), an empowerment-based social assistance program aimed at supporting the graduation and economic independence of Beneficiary Families (KPM) through productive business assistance, training, and mentoring based on an ability, asset, and access approach. However, compared to regular social assistance coverage, the implementation of PPSE still faces several factual issues, such as limited coverage of targeted beneficiaries, unequal distribution of recipients across regions, and suboptimal sustainability of social assistance.

One challenge in the implementation of PPSE is the limited coverage of program recipients compared to the number of social assistance recipients who are potential targets for economic empowerment. By 2025, PPSE recipients will only reach around 10,000 beneficiaries, while the Family Hope Program (PKH) will reach around 10 million beneficiaries and the Staple Food Program will reach over 18.27 million beneficiaries nationally. The coverage of PPSE recipients is still very small compared to regular social assistance. This indicates that the challenge of program implementation lies not only in policy design, but also in the program's ability to expand the reach of economic empowerment more optimally. In addition to the limited coverage of beneficiaries, policy implementation also shows unequal distribution between regions, both at the provincial and district/city levels. Of the 38 provinces, PPSE recipients are found in only 26, while 12 other provinces have not yet been covered by the program. This situation indicates that the program implementation process is still selective and has not yet reached all administrative regions in Indonesia. Based on the results of the data search, there is significant variation in the number of recipients between provinces. Most recipients are concentrated on the island of Java, particularly in West Java (2,038 beneficiaries), the Special Region of Yogyakarta (1,958 beneficiaries), East Java (1,710 beneficiaries), and Central Java (1,631 beneficiaries). These four provinces contribute 7,337 beneficiaries, or approximately 73.37% of the total 10,000 PPSE recipients nationwide. Conversely, several provinces have very small numbers of recipients, such as East Nusa Tenggara (7 beneficiaries), Gorontalo (3 beneficiaries), South Sulawesi (3 beneficiaries), Southeast Sulawesi (3 beneficiaries), North Kalimantan (1 beneficiary), and North Sulawesi (1 beneficiary).

The disparity in the implementation of socioeconomic empowerment programs is not only evident at the provincial level but also at the district/city level, as the program's implementing units. This variation in the distribution of recipients between regions indicates that not all regions have the same level of implementation intensity in implementing PPSE. This condition is reflected in the still limited number of districts/cities with program recipients nationally. Of the 514 regencies/cities in Indonesia, recipients of the Socio-Economic Empowerment Program (PPSE) are only spread across 148 regencies/cities. Conversely, approximately 366 regencies/cities have no PPSE recipients at all. Data shows that the scope of socio-economic policy implementation is still relatively limited and has not reached most administrative regions in Indonesia. This indicates an implementation gap between the objectives of the socio-economic empowerment policy and the realization of program implementation at the regional level. These findings indicate that policy implementation outcomes may vary across regions despite nationally standardized policy guidelines. Policy implementation involves interactions among multiple actors across different levels of governance, making coordination and institutional capacity crucial factors in determining implementation outcomes (Hill & Hupe, 2002). Thus, variation in PPSE implementation between regions is important to further study to understand the factors that influence the success and limitations of program implementation in the regions.

Sleman Regency was selected as the research location because the Special Region of Yogyakarta has one of the highest numbers of PPSE recipients nationally despite having only five regencies/cities. This condition indicates relatively strong regional implementation capacity and makes Sleman relevant for examining the dynamics of PPSE implementation at the local level. These various factual issues demonstrate that policy implementation is a critical aspect in determining the achievement of socioeconomic empowerment programs at the regional level. Previous studies on social entrepreneurship and economic empowerment have largely focused on poverty alleviation, sustainable development, institutional support, and entrepreneurial ecosystem capacity (Diaz-Sarrachaga & Ariza-Montes, 2022; Duong, 2025; Fox et al., 2023; Wevers et al., 2025). In the Indonesian context, research has primarily examined program effectiveness, empowerment innovation, and the role of social facilitators in supporting productive economic activities among social assistance beneficiaries (Qolbiyani et al., 2025; Yuda et al., 2023; Yuhendra et al., 2022). However, limited attention has been given to the dynamics of policy implementation at the regional level, particularly regarding how implementation capacity, actor coordination, and institutional context shape the implementation of socio-economic empowerment programs. Although these studies have addressed aspects of program implementation, they have

focused on program outcomes and factors contributing to success, without in-depth examination of the dynamics of policy implementation at the regional level.

Previous studies have paid limited attention to the implementation dynamics of socio-economic empowerment policies at the regional level, particularly regarding how local implementation capacity, actor coordination, and institutional context shape policy implementation. This study addresses the limited attention given to the implementation dynamics of socio-economic empowerment policies at the regional level. Specifically, it examines how policy content, implementation context, local actor coordination, and institutional capacity influence the implementation of PPSE in supporting beneficiaries' graduation from social assistance. Based on this gap, this study examines how the implementation of PPSE supports beneficiaries' graduation from social assistance and economic independence in Sleman Regency.

Unlike previous studies that predominantly examine socio-economic empowerment programs from the perspectives of program effectiveness, poverty alleviation, social entrepreneurship, or the role of facilitators, this study offers a policy implementation perspective by examining how policy content, implementation context, local implementation capacity, and intergovernmental coordination interact to shape the implementation of the Socio-Economic Empowerment Program (PPSE). Focusing on Sleman Regency as a region with relatively strong PPSE implementation, this study provides empirical evidence on how local institutional dynamics and actor coordination influence graduation-oriented empowerment policies. Accordingly, this research extends the policy implementation literature by explaining the mechanisms through which local governance capacity and multi-level coordination determine the effectiveness of social assistance graduation and economic empowerment programs.

METHOD

This research employs a post-positivism paradigm with a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach was chosen to gain a deeper understanding of the implementation process of the Socio-Economic Empowerment Program (PPSE) within the context of policy implementation at the regional level. The post-positivism paradigm was adopted because the social reality of policy implementation is understood as something that can be observed empirically but cannot be explained solely, necessitating the use of multiple data sources and triangulation to gain a more comprehensive understanding (Creswell, 2018).

The research was conducted in Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region, in 2025. The location was selected based on Yogyakarta Special Region's position as the province with

the second-highest number of PPSE recipients nationally, although it is not among the provinces with the highest poverty rates in Indonesia. Sleman Regency was chosen because it has a relatively high number of PPSE recipients in Yogyakarta and heterogeneous regional characteristics, making it relevant for understanding the dynamics of program implementation in the region.

Research data were obtained through in-depth interviews and document studies. Interviews were conducted semi-structured, guided by Merilee S. Grindle's policy implementation framework, specifically the dimensions of policy content and implementation context. Research informants included officials from the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, officials from the Social Services Offices of Yogyakarta Province and Sleman Regency, social facilitators, academics, and PPSE Beneficiary Families (KPM). Documentary studies were conducted on regulations, technical instructions, program implementation reports, beneficiary data, and other supporting documents related to the implementation of the socio-economic empowerment program.

Data analysis employed Creswell's data analysis spiral model, which involved organizing the data, reading the entire dataset, coding, developing themes, generating descriptions, and interpreting the meaning of the data. The coding process involved a combination of deductive and inductive coding. Deductive coding was used based on Grindle's policy implementation dimensions, while inductive coding was used to identify empirical themes emerging from the field data. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, technical triangulation, documentation review, and limited member checking with several informants.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

PPSE Implementation Oriented Toward Beneficiary Graduation and Business Readiness

The findings indicate that the implementation of the Socio-Economic Empowerment Program (PPSE) in Sleman Regency is primarily directed toward Beneficiary Families (KPM) that demonstrate business readiness and have the potential to graduate from social assistance. Beneficiaries are generally selected from recipients of the Family Hope Program (PKH) and the Staple Food Program who already operate small-scale productive businesses but require additional capital and business support. Prior to program implementation, social facilitators and local government agencies conduct socio-economic assessments to evaluate business potential, household conditions, and beneficiaries' readiness for economic development.

The implementation process emphasizes productive assistance rather than consumptive support. Business grants are mainly utilized to purchase productive equipment, expand working

capital, and improve business operations, thereby strengthening the capacity of existing micro-enterprises. This approach reflects the program's orientation toward encouraging sustainable livelihoods and reducing long-term dependence on social assistance.

Nevertheless, the findings also reveal that achieving graduation from social assistance remains a gradual process. Financial assistance alone is insufficient to ensure sustainable economic independence because beneficiaries continue to face limitations related to business scale, market access, and changing socio-economic conditions. Consequently, graduation depends not only on productive assistance but also on continuous mentoring and broader institutional support.

The Strategic Role of Social Facilitators in PPSE Implementation

The implementation of PPSE is strongly influenced by the active involvement of social facilitators throughout the implementation process. Their responsibilities extend beyond administrative functions to include identifying potential beneficiaries, conducting socio-economic assessments, assisting beneficiaries in preparing business plans, supervising the utilization of productive assistance, and monitoring business development after assistance has been distributed.

The findings demonstrate that facilitators also contribute to strengthening entrepreneurial capacity by providing guidance on business management, financial planning, and problem-solving. This mentoring process encourages beneficiaries to develop greater confidence and readiness for economic independence while fostering a gradual shift away from dependence on regular social assistance.

Furthermore, facilitators function as intermediaries connecting beneficiaries with government institutions and other supporting stakeholders. Through continuous monitoring and coordination, facilitators are able to identify business constraints and facilitate access to complementary support such as training, technical assistance, and institutional collaboration. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of PPSE is closely associated with the capacity and commitment of facilitators in translating policy objectives into practical implementation.

Local Coordination as a Determinant of Program Implementation

The findings show that effective implementation of PPSE in Sleman Regency is supported by intensive coordination among local government institutions, social facilitators, and the Ministry of Social Affairs. Coordination occurs throughout the stages of beneficiary identification, proposal submission, verification, implementation, and monitoring, creating relatively consistent communication among actors at different administrative levels.

Local governments play an important role in identifying eligible beneficiaries and consolidating proposals before submission to the central government. However, the final determination of program recipients remains centralized through the Ministry of Social Affairs using the national beneficiary database. This institutional arrangement illustrates that successful implementation depends on both central policy decisions and the administrative capacity of regional implementing agencies.

The relatively high number of PPSE beneficiaries in the Special Region of Yogyakarta indicates that proactive coordination and institutional responsiveness at the regional level contribute substantially to successful program implementation. These findings highlight the importance of collaborative governance in strengthening policy implementation within decentralized administrative systems.

Limited Coverage and Unequal Distribution of PPSE

Despite generally successful implementation in Sleman Regency, PPSE continues to face challenges related to limited program coverage and unequal regional distribution. The number of beneficiaries receiving productive assistance remains considerably smaller than the total population of social assistance recipients with the potential for economic empowerment. Regional disparities are also evident in the distribution of beneficiaries across provinces and districts. The findings suggest that these differences are influenced not only by socio-economic conditions but also by variations in institutional capacity, administrative preparedness, and the initiative of local governments and social facilitators in proposing eligible beneficiaries.

Budget limitations further constrain program expansion, requiring the central government to allocate assistance selectively across regions. Consequently, many areas with potential beneficiaries have not yet been reached by the program. These findings indicate that the effectiveness of PPSE depends not only on policy design but also on the availability of financial resources and the implementation capacity of regional institutions.

Furthermore, the following is an analysis of the implementation of PPSE based on Grindle's policy implementation framework:

1. Content of Policy

The policy content dimension in the implementation of PPSE relates to how program objectives, target recipients, change targets, decision-making mechanisms, and the characteristics of program implementers influence policy implementation at the regional level. In practice, PPSE is not only oriented towards providing productive business assistance, but is also directed at encouraging graduation from social assistance and strengthening the economic

independence of KPM. However, this orientation in its implementation also gives rise to various implementation challenges, ranging from the selectivity of recipient targets to the capacity of program implementers at the local level.

Affected Interests

The implementation of the Socio-Economic Empowerment Program (PPSE) reflects a shift in social welfare policy from consumptive social assistance to productive economic empowerment. This program not only functions as business assistance for Beneficiary Families (KPM), but also aims to support the graduation from social assistance and beneficiaries' economic self-reliance. In its implementation, targeting program recipients involves the central government, local governments, and social facilitators through data collection, assessment, verification, and proposals for potential beneficiaries.

The implementation of PPSE demonstrates that the distribution of program recipients is not solely determined by administrative poverty data, but is also influenced by the capacity and activeness of regional actors in responding to the program. The high number of PPSE recipients in Yogyakarta demonstrates that the active involvement of local governments and social facilitators in data collection, proposal consolidation, and coordination with the central government also influences regional access to socioeconomic empowerment programs.

Furthermore, the program's emphasis on graduation from social assistance influences how implementing actors prioritize program recipients. Local governments and social facilitators tend to nominate beneficiaries with greater business readiness and development opportunities to more easily achieve graduation and economic independence. This approach helps increase program effectiveness, but also demonstrates that beneficiaries with initial business capacity have easier access to economic empowerment programs than those in poor communities with limited economic resources.

Grindle (2017) argues that the interests of affected actors can influence the direction of policy implementation. This study demonstrates that the central government's interest in encouraging graduation from social assistance aligns with the interests of local governments and social facilitators in demonstrating the success of program implementation in their assisted areas.

Degree of Desired Change

The Socio-Economic Empowerment Program (PPSE) not only targets increasing beneficiary income but also encourages a change in the status of Beneficiary Families (KPM) from social assistance recipients to an independent and graduated group. With this orientation,

implementing socio-economic policies requires relatively significant socio-economic changes within a limited timeframe.

The orientation toward graduation from social assistance influences program implementation on the ground, particularly in determining beneficiary targets. Local governments and social facilitators tend to prioritize beneficiaries who already have businesses or are considered more ready to develop, making graduation and economic independence easier to achieve. These findings emphasize that the target changes in the PPSE relate not only to economic improvement but also to the social readiness of beneficiaries to emerge from dependence on social assistance.

In practice, changes in the socioeconomic status of beneficiaries cannot be achieved instantly through productive business assistance alone. A business grant of Rp 5 million may not necessarily create immediate economic stability for all beneficiaries, especially micro-enterprises that still face limited capital and market access. Furthermore, changes in deciles and updates to the DTSEN data also impact the sustainability of beneficiary participation and the graduation process.

From a policy implementation perspective, Grindle (2017) explains that the greater the change a policy aims to achieve, the more complex the implementation process. This study confirms that the graduation and economic independence targets in PPSE require beneficiary readiness, implementer capacity, and a relatively strong implementation environment.

Location of Decision Making

The implementation of the Socio-Economic Empowerment Program (PPSE) demonstrates that the program's decision-making process still tends to be centralized, particularly in determining program recipients and finalizing inter-regional quotas. Local governments and social facilitators have the authority to propose potential beneficiaries, but the final decision rests with the central government through the verification and matching process of DTSEN data. This pattern indicates that local governments do not yet have full authority to determine the targets and number of program recipients within their jurisdictions. Consequently, the implementation of PPSE in the regions remains highly dependent on central government decisions, particularly regarding the finalization of recipients and program allocation. This finding suggests that the implementation of socioeconomic empowerment programs is still dominated by a top-down decision-making structure. At the same time, centralized decision-making means that program distribution between regions does not always align with regional needs. Some regions with significant beneficiary needs still have a limited number of program recipients. This phenomenon

indicates that social policy implementation is influenced not only by regional poverty levels but also by the existing decision-making mechanisms and program allocation systems. According to Grindle (2017), the location of decision-making influences the scope of action of implementing actors. This study confirms that although regions are involved in the proposal process, formal decisions on policy implementation remain with the central government.

Program Implementers

The implementation of the Socio-Economic Empowerment Program (PPSE) in Sleman Regency relies heavily on the role of social facilitators as program implementers in the field. Social facilitators are involved in various stages of implementation, from identifying potential beneficiaries and initiating proposals and socio-economic assessments, business assistance, monitoring, and the KPM graduation process. This position makes social facilitators the actors with the most understanding of the beneficiaries' conditions and the primary liaison between policy and the community. In practice, social facilitators not only perform administrative functions but also play a role in ensuring that business assistance is utilized according to the beneficiaries' needs. They help provide business motivation, monitor business development, and assist beneficiaries when facing business obstacles. This reinforces the finding that PPSE implementation depends not only on the business assistance provided but also on the quality of the assistance provided in the field.

The extensive involvement of social facilitators demonstrates that the success of PPSE implementation is significantly influenced by the capacity of program implementers at the local level. The high number of PPSE recipients in Sleman is inextricably linked to the active role of social facilitators in data collection, proposals, and assistance to beneficiaries. At the same time, the extensive role they play also places a significant burden on the social facilitators for program implementation. Consequently, the quality of program implementation can vary significantly across regions, depending on the capacity, intensity of assistance, and capabilities of each social facilitator. From a policy implementation perspective, Grindle (2017) explains that successful implementation is heavily influenced by the capacity and commitment of program implementers. This study confirms that social facilitators function not only as technical implementers but also as key actors determining the intensity and success of PPSE implementation at the field level.

2. Context of Implementation

The implementation context dimension relates to how actor power, institutional capacity, implementation strategies, and implementer responsiveness influence PPSE implementation at the local level. The experience of PPSE implementation in Sleman Regency illustrates that

program success is influenced not only by central policy design, but also by the ability of local actors to build coordination, manage institutions, and adapt program implementation to field conditions.

Power, Interests, and Actor Strategies

The implementation of the Socio-Economic Empowerment Program (PPSE) in Yogyakarta Special Region and Sleman Regency confirms that program implementation is influenced not only by formal policies but also by the strategies of regional actors in driving program implementation. Local governments and social facilitators actively coordinate, communicate, and consolidate proposals to ensure optimal program implementation in the regions. This strategy is evident in the efforts of local governments and social facilitators to map potential beneficiary families (KPM) who are graduating, strengthen coordination between levels of government, and build intensive communication with the central government. This indicates that PPSE implementation is not passively following central policies, but is influenced by the ability of local actors to utilize available implementation space.

These findings reveal that actor capacity and strategy are crucial factors in the implementation of socioeconomic empowerment programs. Regions with more active coordination and communication regarding implementation tend to be more capable of driving program implementation than regions with more limited implementation capacity. Therefore, PPSE implementation is influenced not only by policy design but also by the relationships, interests, and strategies of actors involved in the program implementation process. Grindle (2017) emphasizes that actors' power, interests, and strategies influence the direction and success of policy implementation. The results of this study indicate that PPSE implementation in DIY is supported by the active involvement of regional actors in developing coordination and program implementation strategies.

Institutional and Regime Characteristics

The implementation of the Socio-Economic Empowerment Program (PPSE) in Sleman Regency demonstrates that regional institutional capacity is a crucial factor in supporting its implementation. Coordination between the central government, the Yogyakarta Provincial Social Service, the Sleman Regency Social Service, and social facilitators has been relatively active, particularly in the proposal process, data verification, and monitoring of program implementation. Program implementation in the field depends not only on formal bureaucratic mechanisms but also on flexible coordination and communication between implementing actors. Various technical

implementation issues are often resolved through informal communication between actors to ensure faster and more responsive program implementation to field conditions.

Meanwhile, the implementation of PPSE remains highly dependent on the capacity of social facilitators at the local level. The absence of a dedicated structure or unit specifically handling socioeconomic empowerment programs means that PPSE implementation remains integrated with social facilitation tasks and other social assistance programs. This dynamic indicates that the sustainability of program implementation is still influenced by the capacity and initiative of implementing actors at the regional level.

Furthermore, the use of DTSEN and digital-based reporting systems also influence program implementation patterns in the regions. Institutional characteristics influence an organization's ability to translate policy objectives into implementation practices (Grindle, 2017). The results of this study indicate that PPSE implementation is influenced not only by central policy design but also by regional institutional capacity in managing program coordination and implementation at the local level.

Compliance and Responsiveness

The implementation of PPSE in Sleman Regency confirms that the program's implementation is not entirely rigid, following formal policy guidelines. In practice, social facilitators often make adjustments to field conditions, including during the identification, proposal, and assistance of beneficiary families (KPM), based on the beneficiaries' socioeconomic situation. In addition to following formal mechanisms through SIKS NG and DTSEN-based verification, implementation in the field also demonstrated adjustments based on business conditions and beneficiary readiness. In some cases, social facilitators continued to propose beneficiaries deemed to have business potential even though they did not fully meet the ideal conditions outlined in the program guidelines.

This reality demonstrates that implementing social policies at the local level requires responsiveness from implementers in adapting programs to the social realities of the community. Social facilitators not only enforce administrative regulations but also adapt implementation to ensure programs remain effective and adapt to the conditions of beneficiaries on the ground. Successful implementation is determined not only by compliance with formal procedures but also by implementers' responsiveness to local conditions (Grindle, 2017). This study demonstrates that PPSE implementation is dynamic because it is influenced by the interaction between formal rules and local social conditions in program implementation.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Socio-Economic Empowerment Program (PPSE) in Sleman Regency has generally demonstrated good implementation in supporting the empowerment and graduation readiness of Beneficiary Families (KPM). This is evident in the active process of mapping and proposing beneficiaries, the strong role of social facilitators in business assistance, and the relatively effective coordination between implementing actors at the regional level and with the central government. PSE implementation in Sleman also demonstrates that the capacity of local actors, the responsiveness of implementers, and the intensity of social assistance are important factors supporting the successful implementation of the socio-economic empowerment program at the local level. There is a need for more intensive and systematic mentoring and motivational strengthening programs for regular social assistance beneficiaries so that they are ready to participate in socio-economic empowerment activities and are ready to graduate from regular social assistance, so that the targets of social assistance can be shifted to communities in greater need. The findings suggest that socio-economic empowerment policies cannot rely solely on productive business assistance. Sustainable graduation from social assistance also requires strong social facilitation, adaptive local implementation capacity, and effective coordination among actors at multiple levels of government.

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