

Village Community Assistance in Achieving the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) in Plumbon Village and the Challenges Faced

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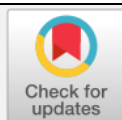
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ABSTRACT

Rural community development is intrinsically linked to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for villages. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Village SDGs in Plumbon Village (PV). Employing a qualitative research approach, data were collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews. The findings reveal that the implementation of the Village SDGs in PV has achieved notable success across several key components, including the establishment of a safe and comfortable village, a peaceful and just community, the eradication of hunger, strong women's participation, sustainable consumption, and production practices, reduced inequalities, enhanced health and well-being, access to quality education, environmental conservation efforts, and the development of dynamic institutional structures. However, the study also identifies several challenges, such as improving infrastructure, empowering the community, managing agricultural and environmental resources, enhancing education and healthcare services, optimizing public service delivery, fostering effective communication and community engagement, and addressing shared aspirations and expectations within the community.

Keywords: Community Empowerment; Rural Challenges; Sustainable Development Goals; Village Development; Village SDGs

1. Introduction

In 2015, the United Nations introduced the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, commonly known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to eradicate poverty, protect the planet, and ensure sustainable prosperity for all (United Nations, 2015). The SDGs emphasize development at the local level, particularly in rural areas, where a significant proportion of the global population resides.

Village-level development holds considerable potential for empowering local communities and reducing inequalities (Jamaludin, 2016). However, rural communities often face substantial challenges, including limited resources, restricted access to basic services, and low levels of community engagement in the development process. Therefore, capacity-building programs and community mentoring are crucial to ensuring that village development progresses effectively and sustainably (Adisasmita, 2006).

In Indonesia, the Government of Indonesia, through Ministerial Regulation No. 21 of 2020 on the General Guidelines for Village Development and Community Empowerment, underscores the importance of SDGs Desa (Sustainable Development Goals for Villages) as an integrated approach to rural development, designed to accelerate the achievement of sustainable development targets. SDGs Desa have been a priority program funded by Village Funds (Dana Desa) since 2021 (Boekoesoe & Maksum, 2022). The Village SDGs framework has eighteen objectives: eradicating poverty and hunger, improving health and education, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and establishing peaceful and just rural communities (Nafi', 2023).

Community empowerment in villages is a developmental approach that emphasizes enabling local communities to identify problems, formulate solutions, and implement development initiatives. This approach fosters stakeholder collaboration, including the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector actors, and local communities. Through such partnerships, villages can address development challenges and enhance socio-economic resilience.

Plumbon Village (PV), located in Mojolaban Subdistrict, Sukoharjo Regency, encounters challenges and opportunities in implementing the Village SDGs through training and community empowerment programs. Regarding SDG 1: No Poverty, PV grapples with poverty-related issues. According to 2024 data from BPS Sukoharjo, the total population of Sukoharjo Regency stands at 68.79 million, with 7.9% of residents living below the poverty line, which is set at Rp 476,675.00 per capita per month (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Sukoharjo, 2024). These statistics highlight the need for enhanced poverty reduction strategies in PV.

Meanwhile, concerning SDG 2: Hunger-Free Villages, preliminary research indicates that no residents in PV experience hunger, suggesting that this aspect does not require immediate intervention. However, other critical aspects of the Village SDGs still require further reinforcement to ensure holistic development. These include SDG 3 (healthy and prosperous villages), SDG 4 (quality education in villages), SDG 5 (women's participation in village development), SDG 6 (access to clean water and sanitation), SDG 8 (inclusive economic growth in villages), SDG 9 (infrastructure and village innovations tailored to community needs), SDG 10 (inequality-free villages), SDG 11 (safe and comfortable village settlements), SDG 12 (environmentally responsible consumption and production), SDG 16 (peaceful and just villages), and SDG 17 (partnerships for village development).

Plumbon Village possesses significant potential to achieve the Village SDGs through structured training and targeted community assistance programs. Through the implementation of effective development strategies and the active engagement of the community, PV can

advance sustainable rural transformation while aligning with national and global development goals.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Village Community Assistance

According to Miftahulkhair, facilitation is a process designed to improve the quality of life within a community through activities aimed at enhancing human resources (HR) in alignment with the needs of the target community (Miftahulkhair, 2018). Facilitators provide guidance, advice, and consultative support without exercising authoritative control, ensuring the facilitators and the community share common objectives.

Sundari et al. define facilitation as a key component of community empowerment programs, in which facilitators serve as mediators, communicators, and catalysts, pivotal in determining the success of empowerment initiatives (Sundari et al., 2022). Their involvement fosters an inclusive and participatory approach to community development.

Villages are predominantly associated with agricultural livelihoods. Egon E. Bergel defines a village as a settlement of peasants, emphasizing its fundamental role as a dwelling place for a relatively small, cohesive community, often referred to in sociological terms as a "community" (Raharjo, 2004). Similarly, Koentjaraningrat defines a village as a localized settlement inhabited by a specific population group with distinct social structures and economic functions (Raharjo, 2004).

Drawing from these perspectives, facilitation can be understood as assisting individuals or community groups in achieving the objectives of development programs. Facilitators function as enablers, communicators, and catalysts, while the community retains primary agency and decision-making authority in the facilitation process. In this context, village community facilitation assists rural communities in implementing programs to support their socio-economic development and overall well-being. Specifically, in Plumbon Village (PV), facilitation efforts are directed toward implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Villages, ensuring that local communities are actively engaged in achieving their developmental aspirations.

2.2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Villages

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) constitute a global initiative to enhance societal well-being while ensuring environmental sustainability. The SDGs encompass 17 interrelated goals with 169 measurable targets, established by the United Nations as a comprehensive framework for global development. These goals address key social, economic, environmental, legal, and governance aspects (United Nations, 2017).

As outlined by the United Nations, the SDGs are integral to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, launched in 2015, which aims to eradicate poverty and foster global peace, prosperity, and equity within a sustainable planetary framework. The UN states:

"The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was launched in 2015 to end poverty and set the world on a path of peace, prosperity, and opportunity for all on a healthy planet. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) demand nothing short of a transformation of the financial, economic, and political systems that govern our societies today to guarantee the human rights of all. They require immense political will and ambitious action by all stakeholders" (United Nations, 2020).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a collective global commitment, endorsed by 193 countries, to achieve sustainable development by 2030. In September 2015, all 193 United Nations member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes the 17 SDGs (United Nations, 2015). These goals provide a holistic framework to address development challenges comprehensively, ensuring effective and inclusive progress. Given their broad applicability, the SDGs are particularly relevant to rural development, offering strategic guidelines for enhancing economic resilience, social equity, and environmental sustainability within village communities.

2.3. Challenges in Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Villages

Rollings and Adams define challenges as obstacles and competition encountered during activities, which can serve as motivation to overcome barriers and achieve success (Rollings & Adams, 2003). Similarly, Lauer asserts that optimal difficulty levels elicit appropriate responses, whereas challenges that are too minor or excessively difficult may fail to generate an adequate reaction (Lauer, 2003). In a broader context, overwhelmingly difficult challenges often result in frustration, while insufficient challenges can lead to boredom or a lack of motivation.

In the context of achieving village-level Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Djahmiq and Salahudin identified several critical challenges, stating:

"The challenges in village infrastructure and innovation development include the focus of village governments on infrastructure development in innovation programs; challenges in village regulations that hinder development; bureaucratic obstacles in village development; challenges in community participation, where some are reluctant to accept development due to the unclear nature of these initiatives; and challenges related to the ambiguity of authority at the district government level, leading to difficulties in formulating and implementing village government policies" (Djahmiq & Salahudin, 2022).

Based on preliminary observations, the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Plumbon Village (PV) is confronted with several key challenges:

- 1) The first challenge pertains to optimizing the utilization of natural resources. PV possesses abundant natural resources, including fertile agricultural land and clean water. With appropriate guidance and resource management, these assets can be sustainably leveraged to enhance the economic and social well-being of the local community.
- 2) The second challenge involves enhancing community participation. While entrepreneurial potential and willingness to engage in development initiatives exist within PV, structured guidance and capacity-building programs are required to empower residents to identify and seize development opportunities that align with their needs and aspirations.
- 3) The third challenge concerns strengthening human resource availability. PV has a skilled local workforce capable of supporting community empowerment initiatives toward achieving the Village SDGs. Local leaders, educators, and agricultural practitioners with relevant knowledge and expertise can play an instrumental role in facilitating development efforts within the community.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach, integrating local knowledge, institutional support, and sustainable resource management strategies to realize Village SDGs in PV successfully.

3. Research Methodology

This study was conducted in Plumbon Village (PV), Mojolaban Subdistrict, Sukoharjo Regency, Central Java Province. The selection of PV as the research site was based on three key considerations. First, PV demonstrates a strong commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the village level. Second, there is a high level of collaboration between the village government and the community in advancing the SDGs. Third, the researchers have established a formal partnership with PV, as stipulated in Agreement No. 195.1/UN27.22/PT.01.03/2024, signed by the Head of the Research and Community Service Institute of Universitas Sebelas Maret and the Head of Plumbon Village.

This study employs a qualitative research approach, utilizing purposive sampling for data collection. Purposive sampling is a method in which informants are deliberately selected based on their relevance and knowledge of the research topic. Also known as judgmental sampling, this technique relies on the researcher's discretion to identify individuals who can provide the most valuable insights for achieving the research objectives. The informants in this study include the Village Head, the Head of the PKK (Family Welfare Movement), the Head of Development Affairs, and community leaders in PV, all considered key stakeholders with in-depth knowledge of village development and SDG implementation. Data was collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews. To ensure the validity and reliability of findings, source triangulation was applied. The study involved 13 key informants, each selected for their expertise and direct involvement in village development initiatives.

The community service activities conducted in PV were structured into two main stages: preparation and implementation. The preparation stage involved developing essential resources and logistical arrangements to support implementing Village SDG-related initiatives. This included preparing materials on Village SDGs, designing research instruments for community service, identifying and inviting presenters and FGD participants, securing permissions for the FGD venue, and organizing logistical aspects, including consumption and meeting arrangements. The implementation stage involved conducting a series of FGDs to strengthen community involvement and foster collaborative action toward Village SDG realization. These discussions focused on building a shared framework for SDG implementation, developing and enhancing cooperation strategies, preparing community assistance initiatives, and ensuring effective monitoring and evaluation of community service activities.

This study aims to strengthen local community empowerment, improve policy implementation, and promote sustainable development practices in Plumbon Village by integrating qualitative research methods and participatory community service strategies.

4. Results and Discussion

Community service activities under the theme "Developing Village Community Assistance in Realizing Village SDGs in Plumbon Village (PV)" were conducted using a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) approach involving 15 key stakeholders from PV. These stakeholders comprised village officials, community leaders, and members of the Community Service Team. However, two invitees could not attend, resulting in 13 participants, in addition to five members of the Community Service Team.

During the FGD process, participants raised several key proposals to enhance village infrastructure and community well-being. The suggestions were improving the village water system, widening the road crossing the railway track, and promoting organic fertilizers to maintain agricultural land fertility. Additionally, concerns were expressed regarding the education system, particularly concerning access to middle and high schools through competitive admission routes. Unlike urban areas, PV does not receive school seat quotas under the zoning-based school admission system, limiting local students' opportunities for enrollment.

The following section presents the findings related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation in PV, Mojolaban Subdistrict, Sukoharjo Regency, categorized by each SDG component. The initial findings on poverty eradication in PV are detailed as follows:

Table 1. SDGs Components in Plumbon Village, Mojolaban Subdistrict, Sukoharjo Regency

No.	SDGs Component	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Somewhat Agree (SA)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)
1	Poverty-free village	0	4	4	5	0
2	Hunger-free village	5	6	2	0	0
3	Healthy and prosperous village	3	7	2	1	0
4	Village promoting quality education	2	8	2	1	0
5	High engagement of women in village development	5	7	1	0	0
6	Village with access to clean water and sanitation	4	5	2	2	0
7	Village utilizing clean and renewable energy	1	5	4	3	0
8	Village experiencing equitable economic growth	3	4	4	2	0
9	Village with infrastructure and innovations tailored to needs	3	5	3	2	0
10	Village with reduced inequalities	3	4	3	1	1
11	Safe and comfortable village	8	4	1	0	0
12	Village practicing environmentally conscious consumption and production	5	4	0	4	0
13	Village responsive to climate change	3	3	7	0	0
14	Village committed to	2	2	4	5	0

No.	SDGs Component	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Somewhat Agree (SA)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)
	marine environment protection					
15	Village committed to land environment protection	4	5	3	0	1
16	Peaceful and just village	8	4	1	0	0
17	Village fostering development partnerships	3	4	5	0	0
18	Village with dynamic and adaptive institutions	3	7	2	0	0

Source: Research Instrument Calculation Results, October 2024

Based on **Table 1**, several key findings emerge regarding implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Plumbon Village (PV). Safety and comfort (SA = 8/61%) and peace and justice (SA = 8/61%) are among the most highly rated dimensions. This suggests that residents of PV strongly perceive their village as a safe, comfortable, peaceful, and just environment, reflected in their daily lives.

Following these dimensions, PV is also characterized as a hunger-free village (SA = 5/38%), a village with strong female participation (SA = 5/38%), and a village that practices environmentally conscious consumption and production (SA = 5/38%). These findings indicate that a significant portion of the community recognizes these aspects as positively experienced, with nearly 38% of respondents strongly agreeing that these elements contribute to the village's development.

In terms of general agreement (A), 7 respondents (53.8%) agreed that PV is a healthy and prosperous village, while 8 respondents (61.5%) acknowledged that the village promotes quality education. Additionally, 7 respondents (53.8%) agreed regarding women's engagement in village development, and 7 (61.8%) believed that PV has dynamic and adaptive institutions. These results suggest that health and prosperity, quality education, women's participation, and institutional dynamism are well-established aspects of PV development.

Conversely, disagreement (D) was most evident in two categories: poverty-free villages (5 respondents, 38.6%) and villages concerned with the marine environment (5 respondents, 38.6%). These findings indicate that poverty remains a significant concern within PV, a phenomenon that is not uncommon in rural Indonesia. Even in developed countries, such as the United States, poverty persists as an economic issue. Additionally, the lack of concern for the marine environment is explained by PV's geographical characteristics as an inland community distant from coastal areas.

At the lower end of the rating spectrum, strong disagreement (SD = 1/7%) was recorded for PV as a village free from inequality and concerned with terrestrial ecosystems. While 7% of respondents strongly disagreed with these statements, 53% (23% SA, 30% A) affirmed that inequality is minimal and environmental care is present.

Furthermore, 3 respondents (23%) strongly agreed, and 7 (54%) agreed that PV could be characterized as a healthy and prosperous village. Similarly, 2 respondents (15%) strongly agreed, and 8 (62%) agreed that PV provides quality education. The same trend was observed for clean water and sanitation, where 4 respondents (30%) strongly agreed, and 5 respondents

(38%) agreed. Similarly, terrestrial ecosystem care received 4 strong agreements (30%) and 5 agreements (38%), demonstrating moderate environmental awareness within the village.

Regarding institutional dynamics, 3 respondents (23%) strongly agreed, and 7 respondents (54%) agreed that PV possesses dynamic and adaptive institutions, reflecting the village's capacity for policy implementation and governance adaptation.

These findings align with the perspectives of Boekoesoe and Maksum, who emphasized that SDGs for Villages represent a national priority within the 2021 Village Fund allocation (Boekoesoe & Maksum, 2022). Additionally, they support the findings of Nafi', who noted that PV excels in several SDG dimensions, particularly safety and comfort, peace and justice, food security, gender inclusion, sustainable consumption, minimal inequality, health and prosperity, education quality, environmental sustainability, and institutional adaptability (Nafi', 2023).

Despite these successes, in-depth interviews with key informants have revealed several challenges that hinder the full realization of Village SDGs in PV. These challenges, which require strategic interventions, are further detailed in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Opinions for Realizing SDGs in Plumbon Village

Num.	Dimension	Key Considerations
1	Infrastructure Development	1) Reopening the connecting road from Ngeblak Hamlet to PV. 2) Constructing a sports facility building. 3) Improving sanitation, particularly drainage systems.
2	Community Empowerment	1) Encouraging synergy between community stakeholders and the village government for development. 2) Facilitating business capital loans through collaboration between the Village Consultative Body (BPD) and the village government, as practiced in Labon Village. 3) Engaging all village government entities, institutions, community leaders, and religious figures to support development programs.
3	Agriculture and Environment	1) Strengthening the role of the village government as a liaison between agricultural extension officers (PPL) and farmers for pest management. 2) Promoting and facilitating effective waste management practices. 3) Raising public awareness about the importance of responsible waste disposal.
4	Education and Health	1) Enhancing the quality of education, nutrition, and early childhood counseling to support child development. 2) Providing scholarship information, especially for underprivileged residents.
5	Public Services	1) Expanding online public service accessibility. 2) Ensuring equitable access to clean water and sanitation, as PDAM services have not yet reached all residential areas.
6	Communication and Engagement	1) Strengthening communication and engagement among all stakeholders in PV.

Num.	Dimension	Key Considerations
		2) Encouraging dynamic social changes that promote active community participation.
7	Community Aspirations and Shared Hopes	1) Striving for PV to become a more developed and prosperous village. 2) Encouraging the village government to advocate for community aspirations effectively.

Source: Research Analysis Results, October 2024

Based on **Table 2**, several challenges must be addressed by the village government and the community of Plumbon Village (PV) to realize the Village SDGs effectively. These challenges span multiple dimensions, requiring coordinated efforts to ensure sustainable development.

1) **Infrastructure Development**

Improving village infrastructure necessitates reopening the connecting road between Ngeblak Hamlet and PV, constructing sports facilities, and enhancing sanitation systems, particularly drainage improvements, to prevent flooding and ensure public health.

2) **Community Empowerment**

Strengthening community empowerment requires synergistic collaboration between local community members and the village government. This includes the active participation of the Village Consultative Body (BPD) in providing business capital loans, similar to successful initiatives implemented in Labon Village. Additionally, all village government entities, institutions, community leaders, and religious figures must work collectively to support and implement development programs effectively.

3) **Agricultural and Environmental Development**

Ensuring sustainable agricultural and environmental development involves the village government acting as an intermediary between agricultural extension officers (PPL) and farmers to improve pest management strategies. Furthermore, promoting and facilitating waste management practices and public awareness campaigns on proper waste disposal are essential to maintain environmental sustainability.

4) **Education and Health Development**

Enhancing the quality of education, nutrition, and early childhood counseling is critical to ensuring proper child development and well-being. Additionally, providing scholarship opportunities, particularly for underprivileged residents, is necessary to expand educational access and equity.

5) **Public Service Improvement**

Strengthening public service delivery includes implementing digital public services to improve efficiency and accessibility. Moreover, ensuring equitable access to clean water and sanitation remains a pressing issue, as PDAM (local water company) services have yet to reach all residential areas.

6) Communication and Engagement

Improving communication and engagement requires fostering effective dialogue and collaboration among all stakeholders in PV. Furthermore, encouraging dynamic social changes through active community participation is essential for inclusive and sustainable development.

7) Building Shared Aspirations and Expectations

Establishing collective aspirations and addressing public concerns is fundamental to advancing development initiatives and ensuring the long-term prosperity of PV. Sustainable progress can be effectively realized by aligning community goals with village policies.

Challenges must be confronted and addressed to achieve success (Lauer, 2003; Rollings & Adams, 2003). In realizing the SDGs in Plumbon Village (PV), the challenges identified in this study include infrastructure development, community empowerment, agricultural and environmental management, education and health development, public service enhancement, communication and engagement, and the cultivation of shared aspirations. These findings are consistent with those of Djahmiq and Salahudin, who emphasize that infrastructure development and village innovation remain persistent barriers that must be addressed to attain a prosperous and sustainable society (Djahmiq & Salahudin, 2022).

The results of this study indicate that, from a comprehensive perspective, the implementation of SDGs in PV has been largely successful. A deeper analysis of the research findings can be summarized into five key reflections:

First is the prominence of key SDG dimensions. The findings demonstrate that security, comfort, peace, and justice are the cornerstones of PV community life. This reflects a high level of social cohesion, which has the potential to be a model for other villages in achieving similar outcomes.

Second, perceptual imbalances. While security and comfort are widely acknowledged, other dimensions, including inequality reduction and environmental awareness, received lower approval ratings. This indicates the need for targeted strategies to enhance public awareness and strengthen initiatives in these areas.

Third, the role of women's engagement and environmental consciousness. The study highlights that women's participation in village development and environmentally conscious consumption and production are somewhat recognized. However, further efforts are required to ensure these dimensions are deeply embedded and evenly experienced across the community.

Fourth, identifying challenges and implementing data-driven solutions. The in-depth interviews conducted in this study provide a strong empirical foundation for developing evidence-based policies. Implementing community-driven mitigation strategies can enhance the long-term sustainability of SDG programs in PV.

Fifth, relevance to existing literature. When contextualized within the perspectives of previous research (Boekoesoe & Maksum, 2022; Nafi', 2023), these findings further reinforce the validity and credibility of the analysis. The study contributes significantly to the academic discourse on SDG implementation at the village level, providing insights into successes and persistent challenges.

Thus, the findings of this study offer a comprehensive framework for evaluating SDG success at the local level. They underscore the importance of addressing specific challenges to

enhance sustainability and equitable development, ensuring that SDG initiatives effectively translate into meaningful improvements in rural communities.

5. Conclusion

Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Plumbon Village (PV) has demonstrated significant achievements across several key dimensions. PV is recognized as a safe and comfortable village, a peaceful and just community, a hunger-free village, and a village with strong female participation. Furthermore, PV has made progress in promoting environmentally conscious consumption and production, minimizing inequality, ensuring quality education, enhancing health and well-being, fostering concern for terrestrial ecosystems, and maintaining dynamic village institutions. These accomplishments reflect the community's commitment to sustainable development and social cohesion.

However, despite these successes, PV still faces several challenges in achieving its SDG targets. The key challenges include infrastructure development, community empowerment, agricultural and environmental sustainability, education and health improvements, public service enhancement, effective communication and engagement, and fostering shared aspirations. To ensure continued progress, addressing these challenges requires strategic interventions, collaborative efforts, and sustained policy implementation.

To further strengthen SDG implementation, the village government and the community must work in synergy, fostering a cohesive and participatory approach to development. By collaboratively addressing existing challenges, PV can enhance its socio-economic resilience and achieve greater prosperity and long-term sustainability.

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7. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors have declared no potential conflicts of interest regarding this article's research, authorship, and/or publication.

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