

Reality Check Approach Report: Local Perspectives and Experiences of the Village Law in Indonesia

2016



This work is a product of the staff of the RCA+ Project. The findings, interpretations and conclusions herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Kolaborasi Masyarakat dan Pelayanan untuk Kesejahteraan (KOMPAK), the Government of Indonesia or the Government of Australia.

Support for this study and publication has been provided by the Australian Government through KOMPAK. You are free to copy, distribute and transmit this work, for non-commercial purposes.

To request copies of the report or for more information on the report, please contact the KOMPAK – Communication and Knowledge Management Unit (info@kompak.or.id). The reports are also available at the KOMPAK website and the RCA website.

Attribution: The Reality Check Approach+ Team, The Palladium Group. Local Perspectives and Experiences of Village Law in Indonesia. Jakarta, Indonesia, Reality Check Approach (RCA) in collaboration with Kolaborasi Masyarakat dan Pelayanan untuk Kesejahteraan (KOMPAK). 2016.

Photo credits: RCA+ Project

KOMPAK

Jalan Diponegoro No. 72, Jakarta 10320 Indonesia

T: +62 21 8067 5000 F: +62 21 3190 3090

E: info@kompak.or.id

www.kompak.or.id

Reality Check Approach+ Project

Jalan Yusuf Adiwinata Sh No. 7, Jakarta 10350 Indonesia

T: +62 21 3920 318

E: info.rca@thepalladiumgroup.com

www.reality-check-approach.com

**Reality Check Approach Report:
Local Perspectives and Experiences of the
Village Law in Indonesia**

2016



Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures	vi
List of Box Stories	vii
Acknowledgement	ix
Acronyms, Abbreviations and Terms	x
List of Annexes	xii
Executive Summary	xiii
Ringkasan Eksekutif	xviii
1. Introduction	2
2. Methodology	6
2.1 Locations and study participants	8
2.2 Study areas for conversation	10
2.3 Post-field processes	10
2.4 Ethical considerations	11
2.5 Study Limitations	11
3. Findings	14
3.1 Changing Context	14
3.2 Introducing Some of the Village Officials in the Study	16
3.3 Stresses and Strains	24
3.4 Changing Roles and Responsibilities	31
3.5 Knowledge and Understanding of the Village Law	38
3.6 Training and Mentoring	40
3.7 Adapting to New Procedures and Processes	43
3.8 Current Village Priorities for Village Funds	46
3.9 Communities are Left Out of the Process	50
3.10 Only Upwards Accountability	53
4. Study Implications	58

List of Tables and Figures

Tables

Table 1	The Eight Study Locations	7
Table 2	Profile of Village Locations	7
Table 3	Summary of Study Participants Number	9
Table 4	Profile of the Village Heads	17
Table 5	Profile of Village Secretaries	20
Table 6	Profile of BPD officials	22
Table 7	Some examples of different office staff payments	23
Table 8	Profile of BPDs	36
Table 9	Village Funds Received	44
Table 10	Infrastructure funded by the first year of Village Funds	47
Table 11	Village Election Costs	54

* Sources of tables are field researchers' notes

Figures

Figure 1	Adapting Internal and External Relations and Roles	30
Figure 2	Example of timeline of the process to get Village Funds	45

List of Box Stories

Box 1	What's the use of collecting data all the time?	14
Box 2	Burdensome demands from 'above'	15
Box 3	A Father's concerns for his Village head son	24
Box 4	The daily burden of being a Village Head	25
Box 5	Basis for choosing new Sub-Village Head	26
Box 6	Pressure to be the Sub-Village Head	27
Box 7	Problems after completing time in office	27
Box 8	Discouraged to Run for Election by Wife	28
Box 9	The Stress of Being the Village Head	28
Box 10	Busier Sub-Village Head	32
Box 11	The importance of the Village Secretary	33
Box 12	Village Office staff perspective	34
Box 13	So what is the role of the BPD?	35
Box 14	'All my BPD colleagues are passive'	37
Box 15	What is the TPKD? Confusion	38
Box 16	Another Interpretation of TPKD	38
Box 17	Pooling funds	40
Box 18	'Please do not change it again next year'	40
Box 19	Example of reaction to trainings received	41
Box 20	A two month process to get Village Funds	43
Box 21	How do I fund the bribe needed?	44
Box 22	Each new Village Head builds new office	48
Box 23	Always needing maintenance	49
Box 24	Unilateral decisions	50

Box 25	We had more influence on decisions before	51
Box 26	Tensions in the village	51
Box 27	Withdrawal of power from the village	53
Box 28	How to get elected	55
Box 29	Four Candidates Battle Out the elections	55

Acknowledgement

Kolaborasi Masyarakat dan Pelayanan untuk Kesejahteraan (KOMPAK) commissioned this study to Reality Check Approach+ (RCA+) to gain insights into the local perspectives and experiences of the village law in Indonesia. This Reality Check Approach study has been made possible by the work of an enthusiastic team as well as the commitment and support of many people. The Reality Check Approach (RCA) was originally an initiative of the Swedish Embassy in Bangladesh where it was first commissioned in 2007 and has since been adopted in other countries and other contexts. The study was undertaken in December 2015 by a team of local and international researchers and led by an international team leader (see annex 1). The dedication of the team members in taking part in this study and carrying out their work with professionalism, motivation, and respect for their host communities, is much appreciated. We also acknowledge the support of the RCA+ finance and administration staff for their efficient logistical support.

Most importantly, this study was only possible thanks to the many families, their neighbours and communities who welcomed our researchers into their homes and shared their lives with them for a short while. We are grateful to them for this opportunity, and for openly sharing their lives, activities, perspectives and aspirations. We hope that this report reflects well on their views and experiences and helps to make the future implementation of the Village Law relevant and meaningful for them.

Acronyms, Abbreviations and Terms

ADD	<i>Alokasi Dana Desa</i> , Village Funds Allocation
BIMTEK	<i>Bimbingan Teknis</i> (Technical Training)
BLSM	<i>Bantuan Langsung Sementara Masyarakat</i> , Temporary Direct Cash Assistance
BPD	<i>Badan Permusyawaratan Desa</i> , Village Deliberation Body
BPK	<i>Badan Pengawas Keuangan</i> , Finance Inspectorate Agency
BPKAD	<i>Badan Pengelola Keuangan dan Aset Daerah</i> (Regional Finance and Asset management body)
Bappeda	Regional Development Planning Body
Bappenas	Ministry of National Development Planning, Indonesia
BRI	Bank Rakyat Indonesia
Bupati	Regent
BUMDes	<i>Badan Usaha Milik Desa</i> , Village Owned Enterprise
Camat	Head of sub-district
DD	<i>Dana Desa</i> , Village Funds
DPR	<i>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat</i> , Indonesian House of Representatives
Dusun	Sub-village
FHH	Focal household; neighbour of the host households
GOI	Government of Indonesia
Gotong Royong	Mutual cooperation in the community
HHH	Host households; where members of the study team stayed with families
ID	Identification (card)
IDR	Indonesian rupiah
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
Jamkesmas	<i>Jaminan Kesehatan Masyarakat</i> , Community Health Insurance
Kartu keluarga	Family card
Kaur	<i>Kepala Urusan</i> (Sector Head)
Kecamatan	Sub-district
Kepala desa	Village Head
Kepala dusun	Sub-Village Head
Kepala RT	Head of <i>Rukun Tetangga</i> (neighbourhood)
Kerja bakti	Community service

KOMPAK	<i>Kolaborasi Masyarakat dan Pelayanan untuk Kesejahteraan</i> (a facility funded by DFAT)
KPK	<i>Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi</i> , Corruption Eradication Agency
Madrasah	Islamic religious school
Munasah	Small mosque in Aceh Province
Musyawaharah	Community deliberation
OMD	<i>Organisasi Masyarakat Desa</i> , Village Society Organisation
Ojek	Motorbike taxi
Paud	<i>Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini</i> (pre-school)
Pemerintah	The Government
Puskesmas	<i>Pusat kesehatan masyarakat</i> (people's health centre)
Pustu	<i>Puskesmas pembantu</i> sub-health centre under the Puskesmas, usually supporting 2-3 villages
PKK	<i>Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga</i> (Family Wellbeing Development Organisation)
PNPM	<i>Program Nasional Pemberdayaan Masyarakat</i> (National Programme for Community Empowerment)
PNS	<i>Pegawai Negeri Sipil</i> (Civil Servant)
RCA	Reality Check Approach
RCA+	RCA+ Project funded by DFAT
RT	<i>Rukun Tetangga</i> (Neighbourhood Unit, the lowest level of formal community structure)
SeKDes	<i>Sekretaris Desa</i> (Village Secretary)
SMA	<i>Sekolah Menengah Atas</i> (senior secondary school)
SMP	<i>Sekolah Menengah Pertama</i> (junior secondary school)
Tanah Bengkok	Village land
TK	<i>Taman Kanak-kanak</i> (Kindergarten)
TPK	<i>Tim Pengelola Kegiatan</i> (Activity Managing Team)
TPKD	<i>Tim Pengelola Kegiatan Daerah</i> (Activity Managing Regional Team)
Warung	Kiosk

List of Annexes

Annex 1	Research Team	xxv
Annex 2	People Met	xxvi
Annex 3	Areas for Conversation	xxvii

Executive Summary

This Reality Check Approach (RCA) Study was carried out during December 2015. The study was intended to gather insights directly from officials of Village Governments and their constituents on their early experiences of implementation of the Village Law. The study was timed to coincide with the conclusion of the first year of transferring *dana desa* (Village Funds) directly to villages. The intention of this report is to share their perspectives using their words and their views rather than providing an outsider interpretation. In this way it is hoped that consideration will be given to context and relevance in designing and providing further support to the roll out of the Village Law, in particular to inform Ministry-level discussions on plans for 2016 capacity support, targeting of training as well as further 'socialization' on the Village Law.

This study was commissioned by KOMPAK and implemented by the RCA+ project with financial support from the Government of Australia through both KOMPAK and the Knowledge Sector Initiative.

The Reality Check Approach is an internationally recognized qualitative research approach to try to understand context, people's aspirations, their behaviours and day to day lives through their lenses. It involves researchers staying in people's own homes for several days and nights and using this opportunity to 'hang out' and interact informally through chatting and two way conversations. This approach encourages relaxed ordinary interactions and builds trusted relations for open dialogue. It also provides opportunities for the researchers to triangulate conversations with their own first-hand experience and observations over their time spent in the village.

This study took place in eight location across Indonesia; two in Aceh, two in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), two in South Sulawesi and one each in Central and East Java. The study team selected the locations from the proposed districts identified by the study commissioners, using several key criteria: lagging districts and non-lagging districts as well as reported revenue to ensure a diverse range of district types. Using the Village Development Index (2014) specific

villages were selected to represent each category; Independent, Underdeveloped and Developing villages. Finally, two of the eight locations were purposively selected as having women Village Heads.

The study team members lived with a total of thirty one households for four days and nights. These included living with seven Village Heads, and ten other Village Officials. In addition to the 17 Officials with whom the team stayed and consequently had intense interactions, another 162 Village Officials were engaged in detailed conversations. The team also stayed with a further twelve families, especially those who were living in poverty, in order to understand the constituents' perspective. In addition to these households, researchers interacted with neighbours and other community members resulting in purposive conversations with more than 2,600 people during the course of the study.

No matter what the size, each village has a fairly similar village governance structure with the same responsibilities to the community and similar amounts of Village Funds to administer.

Based on our observations and perceptions of people, study villages were categorised after the field visit as either rural or peri-urban. They vary enormously in size, ranging from the smallest with currently only 30 households to the largest, comprising 3,300 households. The villages are often in a state of flux resulting from many factors including population growth, increased inter-connectedness with urban centres and new Village Government regulations. Borders and populations are continually changing and challenges are encountered in keeping the village data up to date and useable for the district governments. The way villages are defined and categorised is also subject to local interpretations and varying definitions.

In the study villages the Village Heads tend to be younger than other village officials and people say there is a growing desire to recruit younger Village Secretaries who are more computer literate. The Village Heads with whom we stayed, who were mostly in their 30s and 40s, all had alternative sources of income, resided in

large and often new brick/cement homes with a wide range of household assets. All but one who only had primary education, had Senior High School (SMA) or higher qualifications and only two came from Village Head dynasties although all were considered to be village elite. Village Secretaries we spent time with were slightly older than the Village Heads reflecting the longer tenure allowed and all but one had SMA or higher qualifications. They too had significant alternative incomes and lived in better homes than the general village population though often more modest than the Village Heads. Where new appointments have been made, people told us they prefer younger candidates because of the requirements of the Village Law for computer literacy. The Badan Permusyawaratan Desa (BPD) members were on the whole a bit older, mostly in their late 40s and 50s and all but one had SMA or higher qualifications.

Village Government structure is fairly similar across the different locations but the number of staff varies considerably. The structure usually comprises an elected Village Head, appointed Village Secretary and Treasurer as the core with a number of sector leads (which vary in different locations to include development, governance, general affairs, social welfare, agriculture, and finance). Some Village Government officials told us that they regarded the BPD and Sub-Village Heads as part of the village government while others did not, seemingly depending on whether they were part of the Village Office salary structure or not. Some included religious leaders on this basis too. Village Offices have between 11 and 20 staff but the number did not correlate with the size of the village. Annual salary costs ranged from about IDR 90 million¹ to IDR 170 million. All but one village have their own Village Office building but these open irregularly and rarely more than about 2 hours per day, usually manned on a rota basis.

This RCA study was undertaken within six months of the first disbursement of Village Funds and in all locations Village Officials

¹ Currency Exchange Rate IDR 100,000 : AUS\$ 10.41 Australian dollars (approximately, January 2016), IDR 100,000 : £ 5.03 British pounds sterling (approximately, January 2016)

shared anticipation mixed with concern and anxiety. The new Village Law is seen by Village Officials as another change in a series of new challenges for Village Governments. All indicated that they were worried about 'getting things wrong' and being culpable for their mistakes. This has led to viewing the Village Law more as a concern than an opportunity. These concerns have translated into a reluctance to continue in positions of authority in the Village Government and an unwillingness to continue to serve the community.

Whereas previously official positions were very much sought after, in particular by members of elite families, officials and their family members described the increased responsibility and burdens resulting from the Village Law as sapping their desire and willingness to continue in these positions. Incumbent Village Heads talked of feeling stressed and tired and how the duties and responsibilities had impacted on family life with two of the eight having marriage break ups as a result. The husband of another said she is always irritable. Other families of Village Officials shared their concerns about the burdens and risks of taking office.

People expect the Village Head to be close to them and approachable but shared that this was not always the case, especially since the introduction of the Village Law which seems to require more time away from the community. Youth (16-25 years old) in particular want a break from electing people based on family ties and say they prefer attributes of openness, honesty and impartiality. Persons with networks are regarded highly. Ex PNPM Village facilitators have assumed many official village positions including Village Head, Village Secretary and BPD members largely, we are told, because of their networks.

The relations, roles and responsibilities of the key actors in the village apparatus have evolved with the challenges of the new Village Law. Across all eight locations, it is clear that the role of **the Village Head has increased in importance and maintaining connections at district and sub-district levels are key.**

This means that there is less time and appetite for community engagement and this activity has devolved to **Sub-Village Heads who now find themselves more burdened with solving local problems and championing local complaints** in addition to the conventional role of being a conduit for information sharing from the village centre to sub-villages. Echoing others, a Sub-Village Head shared that, "Sub-Village Heads have a lot more power and more to do than in the past." Always a key player in the village apparatus, **Village Secretaries are increasingly relied upon by the Village Heads to lead all village administration.** They not only manage the increased paperwork associated with the Village Law but, because of accountability concerns, are increasingly becoming the only one to sign off on proposals, budgets and receipts of funds. There are contrasting views on the future status of Village Secretaries and whether or not they must be or will not be civil servants (PNS status). The Section Head roles, unlike those of the Village Head, Village Secretary and Sub-Village leaders, were never considered onerous and have diminished in importance.

The BPD role, function and presence are the most contested and there is confusion across all the villages. The BPD members themselves say they are ill-informed about their role in the Village Law. Furthermore, across the study locations the wider community rarely knew about the BPD's existence. Within all study villages the BPD members shared that they felt they had limited or no power, even if they wanted to fulfil their role in oversight and accountability. Powers were circumscribed by either being hand-picked by the Village Head as his cronies or being marginalised from meetings and deliberations if they were seen to criticise the Village Government. There is also much confusion over the role of Tim Pengelola Kegiatan (TPK) or Tim Pengelola Kegiatan Daerah (TPKD) and a lack of clarity on membership and how these should operate.

Even those with a better understanding of the Village Law, the focus is on regulations and compliance. Often only Village Secretaries or the more proactive Village Heads have any

of the details of the new Village Law. But even for them the understanding is reduced to a set of immediate directives and compliance rules rather than an understanding of the long term perspective and intentions of the devolution of powers to the village. Mostly Village Officials said they were 'waiting for further direction'. Outside of the Village Government, constituents know very little except for the 2014 Presidential slogan '*satu desa, satu milyar*' ('One village, one billion') which they have heard from the media.

A significant confusion shared across the study locations concerns the separation or pooling of funds. Different interpretations suggest that the funds must be separated while others indicating they must be pooled. Village Officials shared worries that they might be breaking the law pursuing their current practices.

All villages had received some form of training on the Village Law usually attended by the Village Head, Village Secretary and Treasurer. Village officials are happy that three members could always attend the training together, as this provided an opportunity to learn together and support each other after the training.

Whilst people appreciated the training, deeper discussions indicated that they had retained little and had varied understanding of the details. Some were confused by technical jargon and often left the training early and admitted to a common "puzzleness." There were many complaints about the lateness of the training which for many was received some time after disbursement of Village Funds and people worried that they had done things wrong in the meantime. Some shared they were relieved to hear from trainers not to worry too much for the first year as 'there are still many problems from Jakarta'. Central trainings are also liked because of the opportunities to claim travel allowances and to shop or make recreational visits. However, some felt that that hotel based training is not as useful as having a mentor's help in situ. Follow-up training had involved exchanging phone contact details between trainers and trainees but trainees found that the trainers were often un-reachable.

Instead, an informal exchange between trainees has emerged for mutual support, in particular sharing examples of filled-out formats for others to copy and paste.

Village Officials shared that they anticipated help from Village Facilitators in the future, but the ones we met are experiencing problems meeting their obligations to service several villages because there are no transport allowances and salaries are insufficient.

The procedures for villages to receive the Village Law funds from the (sub)-district vary and are generally perceived as 'more complex than previously'. In one village, the whole process required seven different signatures and 'speed money' but still took two months to complete. A number of Village Officials shared the concern that where there was a lack of clarity in the procedures and that they were vulnerable to having to pay bribes. In two locations, Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI) had issued ATM cards to the Village Heads. This meant that Village Heads could access funds without the mandatory two signatures and their Treasurers worried about this.

Village Officials indicated that physical infrastructure is the highest priority for Village Funds given the current climate of uncertainty and confusion on funding sources and processes to obtain them. This is perceived by Village Officials as the least controversial and easiest way to use the money. Infrastructure, they feel, can always be justified as a public good and is a verifiable and visible use of funds. However, it was clear that these projects were not generally people's priorities. In several villages there were dire shortages of irrigation and drinking water but people were told that these were too expensive or not the village's responsibility. In others, youth in particular wanted waged employment in new enterprises. Some villages have constructed new Village Offices fearing this may not be allowed in the future and others have used the funds for religious buildings and to pay the salaries of religious leaders.

People shared with us that there are very few formal opportunities to participate in decisions about village priorities but also that there is a limited appetite for participation in community meetings anyway. Some villagers explained to us that these sort of decisions are best left to elites as, *'it doesn't affect us small people'*. People throughout the study locations on the whole felt that *'as long as promises are kept'* then they don't want to be involved in lengthy formal deliberations. The lack of interest in formal community meetings or visiting the Village Office was apparent across the study locations with a strong preference among most people for informally sharing information. Typically, any deliberations take place in a gazebo or *'baruga'* erected outside people's houses where people share information, viewpoints, stories and gossip. Across all study villages, and as found in other RCA studies conducted in Indonesia, people did not read posters or sign boards.

There is a widespread concern about increasing demands for upward accountability for funds use and worries about the risks associated with signing off documents. However, there was no sense of any increased downward accountability and, as noted above, instead purposeful marginalization of BPD members who ask for this. People openly shared the high costs related to Village elections and campaigning. For example, the combined cost of the Village Head election taking place during the study in one location amounted to more than IDR 600 million.

The study report concludes with a number of study implications have emerged from insights gained by living with and sharing in the day-to-day lives of Village Officials as they adjust to the changes resulting from the introduction of the Village Law. These are further nuanced by the insights of their constituents with whom we stayed or engaged in extensive conversations. The study implications are presented in two sections: 1) from what Village Officials shared with us and 2) from the research team's observations and experiences.

1) What Village Officials have shared.....

On workload and responsibilities.... Many Village Officials feel **extremely stressed** by the demands of the new Village Law and their families are also concerned about their welfare and the longer hours they have had to put in since the Village Law was introduced. Village Officials shared that they don't have the confidence to explore other possibilities beyond safe options of investing in small scale infrastructure, and **do not appreciate that the Village Law can open up opportunities** for alternative responsive investments. Given the additional demands of the Village Law, Village Officials feel there is an urgent need to **rationalise the various demands for village information**. Village Officials are still confused about their new roles. They feel that there is a need to review the roles of the different members of the Village Government and **make sure that work and responsibility (and particularly accountability) is more evenly spread**. There are diverse views on the role of the BPD and some feel the **BPD should be empowered and their roles and responsibilities clarified**.

On training and support: Several Village Officials felt **on-site mentoring is more helpful** than large scale training provided in hotels. Village Officials were disappointed not to be able to contact trainers for clarifications after the formal training and have established their **own informal networks** between cohorts of Village Officials who received formal training together. They draw on these to help clarify Village Law processes and to seek advice or the experience of others about the intended interactions with the Camat and Facilitators.

On Knowledge and Understanding of Village Law..... Village Officials said they need **specific clarifications on the following:** pooling of Village Funds; fund allocation formulas; exactly what Village Funds can and cannot be used for; what district and national funds are intended to cover; the official process for accessing Village Fund tranches; what means for complaints and grievance mechanisms exist for district and sub-district services provided to them; the role of the

Village Facilitator and what they should expect from them in terms of support and frequency of visits; the future status of Village Secretaries as village employees or civil servants. In addition Sub-Village Heads shared that they feel that they do not know enough about the Village Law and how to explain village plans, budgets and expenditures to their constituents.

2) What the research team observed....

Communities know very little about the Village Law and what the changes mean for them and their potential participation. This study and other RCA studies have noted that most people have access to TV and that this is an influential medium for socialisation. **Young people were often quite engaged on Village Governance issues** (more than the older generation) and want to elect different kinds of leaders; younger, more energetic, with IT skills and not from elite dynasties which have dominated village leadership in the past. **Villagers do not realise that they have a right to and can influence village decision making**. In particular the youth shared their frustrations that their needs were not being addressed. As well as influencing decision making, **people did not feel they had a right to accountability from their Village Government** although they often grumbled to us and each other. **Villagers do not read information currently on village boards and notices** and villagers also do not like formal meetings and **prefer the informal opportunities** to catch up with what is going on in the village.

Ringkasan Eksekutif

Studi *Reality Check Approach* (RCA) ini dilaksanakan pada bulan Desember 2015. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mendapatkan pemahaman secara langsung dari para pejabat desa dan konstituennya tentang pengalaman-pengalaman awal mereka dalam pelaksanaan Undang-Undang Desa. Waktu pelaksanaan studi disesuaikan dengan tahapan akhir penyaluran Dana Desa tahun pertama secara langsung ke desa. Hasil studi ini bertujuan untuk menyajikan perspektif mereka melalui pendapat dan kata-kata mereka sendiri, dari pada menggunakan interpretasi orang luar. Dengan cara ini, diharapkan konteks dan relevansi lebih dipertimbangkan dalam proses perencanaan dan pemberian dukungan pelaksanaan Undang-Undang Desa dimasa yang akan datang, khususnya dengan menyediakan informasi yang diperlukan pada diskusi-diskusi tingkat Kementerian mengenai rencana-rencana pengembangan kapasitas, target pelatihan serta 'sosialisasi' lanjutan dari Undang-Undang Desa pada 2016.

Studi ini didukung oleh KOMPAK sebagai komisioner dan dilaksanakan oleh RCA+ *project* dengan dukungan finansial dari pemerintah Australia melalui program KOMPAK dan *Knowledge Sector Initiative*.

RCA merupakan sebuah pendekatan penelitian kualitatif yang telah mendapatkan pengakuan internasional untuk mencoba memahami konteks, aspirasi, perilaku dan kehidupan sehari-hari masyarakat melalui sudut pandang mereka. Dalam pendekatan ini, para peneliti tinggal di rumah masyarakat selama beberapa hari dan menggunakan kesempatan tersebut untuk 'bercengkerama' dan berinteraksi secara informal lewat obrolan dan percakapan dua arah. Pendekatan ini mendorong terciptanya interaksi yang santai, serta membangun hubungan saling percaya demi percakapan yang terbuka. Hal ini juga memungkinkan para peneliti untuk melakukan triangulasi percakapan-percakapan dengan pengalaman langsung mereka serta observasi-observasi yang dilakukan selama mereka tinggal di desa tersebut.

Studi ini dilakukan di delapan lokasi di Indonesia; dua di Aceh, dua di Nusa Tenggara Barat, dua

di Sulawesi Selatan dan masing-masing satu di Jawa Tengah dan Jawa Timur. Tim peneliti memilih lokasi-lokasi penelitian berdasarkan daerah-daerah yang diajukan oleh komisioner, menggunakan beberapa kriteria utama: daerah tertinggal dan daerah yang tidak tertinggal, serta pendapatan daerah guna memastikan keberagaman tipe daerah yang akan dikunjungi. Dengan menggunakan Indeks Pembangunan Desa (2014), tim peneliti memilih desa yang merepresentasikan tiap kategori: desa mandiri, desa tertinggal dan desa berkembang. Pada akhirnya, tim peneliti juga memilih dua dari delapan lokasi yang memiliki kepala desa wanita.

Tim peneliti tinggal bersama 31 rumah tangga selama empat malam. Jumlah tersebut termasuk tinggal bersama 7 Kepala Desa dan 10 Pejabat Desa lainnya. Sebagai tambahan terhadap 17 Pejabat Desa yang tinggal bersama dan akhirnya berinteraksi secara intens dengan tim peneliti, terdapat 162 Perangkat Desa lainnya juga terlibat dalam percakapan-percakapan yang mendetail. Anggota tim peneliti juga tinggal bersama 12 keluarga lain yang bukan merupakan perangkat desa, khususnya mereka yang hidup dalam kemiskinan guna memahami perspektif konstituen. Sebagai tambahan untuk rumah tangga-rumah tangga tersebut, tim peneliti juga berinteraksi dengan tetangga dan anggota masyarakat lainnya yang menghasilkan percakapan purposif (*purposeful conversations*) dengan lebih dari 2.600 orang selama pelaksanaan studi ini.

Terlepas dari ukurannya, setiap desa yang dikunjungi memiliki struktur pemerintahan desa yang relatif sama dengan tanggung jawab yang sama terhadap masyarakat serta jumlah Dana Desa yang sama untuk dikelola. Berdasarkan observasi tim peneliti dan persepsi masyarakat, maka dilakukan pengkategorian desa penelitian setelah kunjungan lapangan sebagai pedesaan atau *peri-urban*. Ukuran desa-desa tersebut sangat bervariasi, mulai dari yang terkecil dengan 30 rumah tangga hingga yang terbesar yang terdiri dari 3.300 rumah tangga. Kondisi desa-desa tersebut sering kali berubah karena berbagai faktor seperti pertumbuhan penduduk, meningkatnya interkoneksi dengan

pusat kota serta peraturan-peraturan Pemerintah Desa yang baru. Perbatasan dan populasi desa terus berubah dan terdapat banyak tantangan dalam memastikan data desa tetap terbaru dan dapat digunakan oleh pemerintahan kabupaten. Cara penetapan dan pengelompokan desa-desa juga sangat tergantung pada interpretasi lokal dan definisi yang berbeda-beda.

Di desa dimana studi dilakukan, Kepala Desa cenderung lebih muda dari perangkat desa lainnya dan masyarakat berkata mulai adanya keinginan yang tumbuh untuk memilih Sekdes (Sekretaris Desa) yang lebih muda yang mampu mengoperasikan komputer. Para Kepala Desa, tempat kami tinggal, sebagian besar berusia 30an dan 40an tahun, semua memiliki sumber penghasilan alternatif dan banyak yang tinggal di rumah besar baru berbahan batu bata/semen, serta memiliki aset rumah tangga yang beragam. Semua Kepala Desa, kecuali satu orang yang hanya memiliki ijazah Sekolah Dasar (SD), memiliki ijazah Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA) atau lebih tinggi. Hanya dua Kepala Desa yang berasal dari dinasti Kepala Desa, meskipun semuanya dianggap sebagai kaum elit di desa. Sekretaris Desa yang menghabiskan waktu bersama kami rata-rata berusia sedikit lebih tua dari pada Kepala Desa, yang mencerminkan lamanya masa jabatan yang diperbolehkan. Semua Sekretaris Desa memiliki ijazah SMA atau lebih tinggi, kecuali satu orang. Mereka juga memiliki penghasilan alternatif yang signifikan dan tinggal di rumah yang lebih baik dari masyarakat desa pada umumnya, meskipun lebih sederhana dari pada rumah Kepala Desa. Saat Sekdes baru telah terpilih, masyarakat mengatakan pada kami bahwa mereka lebih memilih kandidat Sekretaris Desa yang lebih muda karena Undang-Undang Desa mensyaratkan Sekretaris Desa yang dapat mengoperasikan komputer. Anggota Badan Permusyawaratan Desa (BPD) secara keseluruhan sedikit lebih tua, mayoritas berusia 40an akhir dan 50an. Semua anggota BPD yang kami temui memiliki ijazah SMA atau lebih tinggi kecuali satu orang.

Struktur Pemerintahan Desa cenderung sama di semua lokasi, namun jumlah perangkat desa bervariasi. Struktur Pemerintahan Desa

biasanya terdiri dari Kepala Desa yang dipilih melalui pemungutan suara, serta Sekretaris Desa dan Bendahara yang ditunjuk sebagai inti pemerintahan desa dengan sejumlah kepala urusan (yang bervariasi di lokasi-lokasi yang berbeda, mencakup urusan pembangunan, pemerintahan, umum, kesejahteraan sosial, agrikultur dan keuangan). Beberapa perangkat desa beranggapan bahwa BPD dan Kepala Dusun adalah bagian dari perangkat desa sementara sebagian lain tidak berpendapat yang sama. Bagi mereka, hal tersebut tergantung pada apakah mereka termasuk dalam struktur gaji kantor desa atau tidak. Beberapa lokasi memasukkan pemimpin agama dalam struktur gaji tersebut. Kantor desa memiliki antara 11 sampai dengan 20 karyawan akan tetapi jumlah tersebut tidak bergantung pada ukuran desa. Biaya gaji tahunan berkisar antara Rp 90 juta hingga Rp 170 juta. Semua desa memiliki bangunan kantor desa sendiri, kecuali satu desa. Akan tetapi kebanyakan kantor desa tersebut tidak buka secara teratur dan amat jarang buka lebih dari 2 jam sehari, biasanya dijalankan dengan sistem piket secara bergantian.

Studi RCA ini dilaksanakan enam bulan setelah penyaluran Dana Desa pertama kali dan di semua lokasi, perangkat desa menceritakan kegelisahan dan kecemasan mereka. Undang-Undang Desa yang baru dipandang oleh para perangkat desa sebagai suatu perubahan lain dalam serangkaian tantangan baru Pemerintahan Desa. Semuanya mengindikasikan bahwa mereka takut apabila 'melakukan kesalahan' dan disalahkan atas kesalahan mereka. Ini membuat mereka melihat Undang-Undang Desa sebagai sumber kekhawatiran dari pada sebagai sebuah peluang. Kekhawatiran-kekhawatiran tersebut diterjemahkan menjadi keengganan untuk melanjutkan masa jabatan mereka di pemerintahan desa dan ketidakinginan untuk pelayanan kepada masyarakat.

Sebelumnya posisi sebagai perangkat desa sangat diperebutkan, khususnya oleh para anggota keluarga-keluarga terpandang. Para perangkat desa dan anggota keluarga mereka menjelaskan meningkatnya tanggung jawab dan beban dari Undang-Undang Desa,

serta berkurangnya keinginan mereka untuk melanjutkan di posisi-posisi tersebut. Kepala Desa yang sedang menjabat menceritakan betapa stres dan lelahnya mereka, serta bagaimana tugas dan kewajiban mereka berdampak pada kehidupan keluarga mereka. Dua dari delapan Kepala Desa bercerai dari pasangan mereka, dan salah satu suami dari kepala desa mengatakan bahwa istrinya menjadi mudah marah sekarang. Anggota keluarga dari perangkat desa yang lain menceritakan kegelisahan mereka tentang beban dan resiko dari pekerjaan sebagai perangkat desa.

Masyarakat berharap Kepala Desa untuk menjadi lebih dekat dengan mereka dan mudah ditemui, tetapi kenyataannya tidak selalu begitu. Terutama setelah adanya Undang-Undang Desa yang sepertinya memakan lebih banyak waktu lagi sehingga menjauhkan mereka dari masyarakat. Pemuda (16-25 tahun) secara khusus menginginkan agar masyarakat berhenti memilih perangkat desa berdasarkan hubungan keluarga dan mereka lebih menyukai sifat keterbukaan, kejujuran dan ketidakberpihakan. Mereka yang memiliki jaringan luas sangat dihargai dan banyak dari mantan pendamping desa PNPM telah memangku berbagai posisi dalam pemerintahan desa, termasuk Kepala Desa, Sekretaris Desa dan anggota BPD, sebagaimana diceritakan kepada kami, dikarenakan jaringan yang mereka miliki.

Hubungan, peran dan tanggung jawab aktor-aktor utama dalam perangkat desa telah berubah bersama dengan tantangan dari Undang-Undang Desa yang baru. Di delapan lokasi yang kami kunjungi, tampak bahwa peran **Kepala Desa telah meningkat menjadi lebih penting, dan menjaga hubungan di tingkat kabupaten dan kecamatan adalah kuncinya.** Ini berarti berkurangnya waktu untuk pendekatan kepada masyarakat dan aktivitas tersebut diserahkan kepada **Kepala Dusun yang kini merasa lebih terbebani dengan kewajiban untuk menyelesaikan permasalahan lokal dan menanggapi keluhan masyarakat** sebagai tambahan untuk peran lama mereka sebagai penghubung informasi dari desa ke dusun. Seperti yang lainnya, seorang Kepala Dusun

berkata 'Kepala Dusun memiliki kekuasaan dan pekerjaan yang lebih banyak dibandingkan di masa lalu'. Sebagai pemain kunci di Pemerintahan Desa, **Sekretaris Desa makin diandalkan oleh Kepala Desa untuk memimpin seluruh administrasi desa.** Mereka tidak hanya menangani urusan surat-menyurat yang meningkat karena Undang-Undang Desa, tetapi dikarenakan oleh permasalahan akuntabilitas, kini meningkat menjadi satu-satunya orang yang menandatangani proposal, anggaran dan tanda terima dana. Ada pandangan yang bertolak belakang terkait status Sekretaris Desa di masa depan, apakah mereka akan menjadi Pegawai Negeri Sipil (PNS) atau tidak. Kepala Urusan, tidak seperti Kepala Desa, Sekretaris Desa dan Kepala Dusun, tidak pernah dianggap berat dan telah berkurang tingkat kepentingannya.

Peran, fungsi dan keberadaan BPD adalah hal yang paling diperdebatkan dan membingungkan di semua desa. Anggota BPD mengatakan bahwa mereka kurang diinformasikan terkait peran mereka dalam Undang-Undang Desa. Lebih lanjut, dari semua lokasi studi, masyarakat jarang mengetahui tentang keberadaan BPD. Di seluruh lokasi studi, anggota BPD merasa bahwa mereka hanya memiliki kekuasaan yang terbatas atau bahkan tidak ada sama sekali, bahkan ketika mereka ingin memenuhi peran mereka dalam pemantauan dan akuntabilitas. Kekuasaan mereka dibatasi pada pilihan antara ditunjuk secara langsung oleh Kepala Desa sebagai kroni atau dikucilkan dari rapat dan musyawarah karena dianggap terlalu mengkritik pemerintahan desa. Banyak juga kebingungan terhadap peran dari Tim Pengelola Kegiatan (TPK) atau Tim Pengelola Kegiatan Daerah (TPKD), terutama ketidakjelasan terkait keanggotaan dan bagaimana seharusnya mereka berperan.

Mereka dengan pemahaman yang lebih baik mengenai Undang-Undang Desa, hanya fokus terhadap peraturan dan pelaksanaannya. Seringkali hanya Sekretaris Desa dan Kepala Desa yang proaktif yang memiliki pengetahuan rinci mengenai Undang-Undang Desa yang baru. Namun, bagi mereka pemahaman tersebut hanya terbatas pada seperangkat arahan dan

peraturan yang harus dipatuhi ketimbang pemahaman terhadap tujuan jangka panjang dan keinginan untuk mengalihkan kekuasaan ke desa. Kebanyakan perangkat desa mengatakan bahwa mereka 'menunggu arahan lebih lanjut'. Di luar pemerintahan desa, konstituen hanya sedikit mengetahui tentang Undang-Undang Desa kecuali terkait slogan presiden tahun 2014 'satu desa, satu milyar' yang mereka dengar dari media.

Di seluruh lokasi studi banyak terdapat kebingungan terkait pemisahan atau penggabungan dana-dana dengan interpretasi-interpretasi yang berbeda bahwa dana tersebut harus dipisahkan sementara yang lain mengatakan bahwa dana-dana tersebut harus digabungkan. Beberapa perangkat desa juga menceritakan kekhawatiran bahwa mereka akan dianggap melanggar hukum jika melanjutkan apa yang telah mereka lakukan sekarang.

Semua desa telah mendapatkan beberapa bentuk pelatihan terkait Undang-Undang Desa yang biasanya diikuti oleh Kepala Desa, Sekretaris Desa dan Bendahara. Perangkat desa merasa senang saat ketiganya dapat mengikuti pelatihan bersama-sama, yang memberikan kesempatan bagi mereka untuk belajar bersama dan saling mendukung satu sama lain selama pelatihan.

Ketika banyak masyarakat mengapresiasi pelatihan tersebut, diskusi-diskusi mendalam yang kami lakukan mengindikasikan bahwa perangkat desa hanya mendapatkan sedikit hal dari pelatihan dan memiliki pemahaman yang berbeda-beda tentang detailnya, mereka dibingungkan oleh jargon teknis dan seringkali meninggalkan pelatihan lebih awal dan mengakui adanya 'kebingungan umum'. Terdapat banyak komplain atas keterlambatan pelatihan yang di beberapa tempat diberikan setelah disalurkan Dana Desa: hal ini membuat mereka takut atas kesalahan yang mungkin telah mereka lakukan sebelumnya. Beberapa bercerita bahwa mereka menjadi lebih tenang setelah mendengar dari pemateri pelatihan tersebut untuk tidak terlalu khawatir karena 'masih ada banyak permasalahan di Jakarta'. Pelatihan terpusat juga disukai karena adanya kesempatan

untuk mendapatkan tunjangan transportasi dan untuk berbelanja atau pergi rekreasi. Akan tetapi, beberapa beranggapan pelatihan di hotel tidak lebih bermanfaat ketimbang mendapatkan pembimbing *in situ*. Tindak lanjut dari pelatihan dilakukan dengan saling bertukar nomor telepon antara pemateri pelatihan dan peserta pelatihan, namun seringkali pemateri pelatihan tidak dapat dihubungi. Sebagai gantinya tukar menukar data secara informal terjadi antara peserta pelatihan, khususnya dengan memberikan contoh format yang sudah diisi agar yang lain dapat menyalin contoh tersebut.

Perangkat Desa mengatakan bahwa mereka mengharapkan akan adanya bantuan dari Pendamping Desa di masa depan. Tetapi salah seorang Pendamping Desa yang kami temui mengalami masalah untuk melaksanakan kewajiban mereka melayani beberapa desa dikarenakan tidak adanya tunjangan transportasi dan gaji mereka yang tidak mencukupi.

Prosedur bagi desa untuk menerima dana desa dari kecamatan bervariasi dan secara umum dianggap 'lebih rumit dari sebelumnya'. Di salah satu desa yang kami kunjungi, proses pencairan Dana Desa secara keseluruhan membutuhkan tujuh tanda tangan yang berbeda dan 'uang pelicin' namun tetap membutuhkan dua bulan untuk dapat diselesaikan. Sejumlah perangkat desa bercerita tentang kekhawatiran mereka dikarenakan ketidakjelasan prosedur mereka dalam posisi rawan karena harus membayar suap. Di dua lokasi, Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI) telah mengeluarkan kartu ATM kepada Kepala Desa yang berarti mereka dapat mengakses dana tersebut tanpa kewajiban untuk mendapatkan dua tanda tangan dan Bendahara-bendahara mereka merasa khawatir akan hal tersebut.

Perangkat desa mengindikasikan bahwa infrastruktur fisik adalah prioritas utama untuk Dana Desa mengingat adanya ketidakjelasan dan kebingungan terhadap sumber dana dan proses yang dibutuhkan untuk memperoleh dana tersebut. Infrastruktur dipandang oleh perangkat desa sebagai hal yang paling tidak kontroversial dan cara termudah untuk menggunakan dana desa tersebut. Infrastruktur, bagi mereka,

dapat selalu dijustifikasi sebagai sarana publik, dapat diverifikasi dan bukti penggunaan dana yang dapat dilihat secara langsung. Namun, jelas terlihat bahwa proyek-proyek tersebut secara umum bukanlah prioritas masyarakat. Di beberapa desa, kami menemui adanya kekurangan irigasi dan air minum yang amat parah tetapi masyarakat diberitahu bahwa biaya untuk itu terlalu mahal atau bukan merupakan tanggung jawab desa. Di tempat lain, pemuda secara khusus menginginkan lapangan pekerjaan baru. Beberapa desa telah membangun Kantor Desa yang baru karena khawatir mereka tidak bisa melakukannya lagi di masa depan, dan desa lainnya telah menggunakan dana tersebut untuk membangun bangunan keagamaan dan membayar gaji para pemimpin agama.

Masyarakat bercerita kepada kami bahwa sedikit sekali kesempatan mereka untuk dapat berpartisipasi secara formal dalam pengambilan keputusan terkait prioritas desa, namun keinginan untuk berpartisipasi dalam rapat juga terlihat rendah. Beberapa penduduk desa menjelaskan kepada kami bahwa pengambilan keputusan semacam itu lebih baik merupakan urusan elit desa karena 'itu tidak akan berpengaruh terhadap rakyat kecil'. Masyarakat yang kami temui pada studi ini merasa bahwa 'sepanjang janji-janji ditepati' maka mereka tidak ingin terlibat dalam musyawarah formal yang memakan waktu lama. Kurangnya ketertarikan terhadap rapat formal atau mengunjungi kantor desa terlihat di seluruh lokasi dengan preferensi yang kuat di antara masyarakat untuk saling berbagi informasi secara informal. Biasanya musyawarah dilakukan di sebuah *gazebo* atau 'baruga' yang didirikan di luar rumah, tempat masyarakat saling berbagi informasi, sudut pandang, cerita dan gosip. Di seluruh lokasi studi, seperti yang ditemukan di studi RCA lainnya di Indonesia, masyarakat tidak membaca poster atau papan pengumuman.

Ada kekhawatiran yang luas tentang meningkatnya akuntabilitas ke atas tentang penggunaan dana dan kekhawatiran tentang resiko-resiko terkait penandatanganan dokumen. Namun, tidak ada tanda-tanda meningkatnya akuntabilitas ke bawah dan, seperti

dicatat diatas, justru kami menemui anggota BPD yang secara sengaja dimarginalkan karena mempertanyakan tentang hal ini. Masyarakat secara terbuka bercerita tentang tingginya dana terkait pemilihan dan kampanye Kepala Desa. Sebagai contoh, gabungan biaya yang dikeluarkan untuk pemilihan Kepala Desa yang terjadi pada saat studi ini dilakukan di salah satu lokasi mencapai lebih dari Rp 600 juta.

Laporan studi ini merangkum sejumlah implikasi studi dari wawasan yang didapatkan setelah tinggal bersama dan berbagi kehidupan sehari-hari dengan para Perangkat Desa sembari mereka menyesuaikan diri dengan berbagai perubahan yang diakibatkan Undang-Undang Desa. Hal ini kemudian diperkaya dengan nuansa wawasan para konstituen yang diperoleh setelah tinggal dan melakukan percakapan secara ekstensif dengan mereka. Implikasi study disajikan dalam dua bagian: 1) dari apa yang dibagikan oleh para Perangkat Desa dan 2) dari observasi dan pengalaman langsung tim peneliti.

1) Yang dibagikan oleh Perangkat Desa...

Tentang beban kerja dan tanggung jawab... Banyak Perangkat Desa yang merasa **sangat tertekan** atas permintaan Undang-Undang Desa yang baru. Keluarga mereka juga menceritakan kekhawatiran atas kesejahteraan mereka serta jam kerja panjang yang harus mereka lakukan sejak dikeluarkannya Undang-Undang Desa. Perangkat Desa berbagi kepada kami bahwa mereka tidak memiliki kepercayaan diri untuk menggali kemungkinan lain, selain pilihan mudah untuk berinvestasi di infrastruktur skala kecil, dan **tidak merasa Undang-Undang Desa dapat membuka peluang** untuk alternatif investasi responsif. Dikarenakan permintaan tambahan dari Undang-Undang Desa, perangkat desa merasa adanya kebutuhan mendesak untuk **merasionalkan berbagai permintaan terhadap informasi desa**. Perangkat desa masih bingung atas peran baru mereka dan merasa adanya kebutuhan untuk meninjau peranan anggota pemerintahan desa lain dan **memastikan pembagian kerja dan tanggung jawab (khususnya akuntabilitas)**

menjadi lebih merata. Terdapat pandangan-pandangan yang berbeda terhadap peranan BPD dan beberapa merasa **BPD harus diberdayakan serta peran dan tanggung jawab mereka harus diperjelas.**

Tentang pelatihan dan dukungan... Beberapa Perangkat Desa merasa **pembinaan atau mentoring di tempat lebih bermanfaat** daripada pelatihan skala besar yang diselenggarakan di hotel. Perangkat desa kecewa karena tidak dapat menghubungi pemateri untuk klarifikasi setelah pelatihan formal dan mereka telah menjalin **jaringan informal** di antara kelompok perangkat desa yang mengikuti pelatihan formal bersama. Mereka menggunakan jaringan tersebut untuk mengklarifikasi proses Undang-Undang Desa dan mencari saran atau pengalaman pejabat desa lain tentang interaksi dengan Camat dan fasilitator.

Tentang pemahaman atas Undang-Undang Desa.... Perangkat Desa mengatakan bahwa mereka membutuhkan **penjelasan spesifik** mengenai: Penggabungan Dana Desa; formula alokasi Dana; Penjelasan tentang untuk apa Dana Desa dapat digunakan dan tidak dapat digunakan; apa saja tujuan penggunaan Dana Kabupaten dan Nasional; proses resmi dalam tahapan penarikan Dana Desa; apa saja jalur mekanisme pengaduan dan keluhan yang ada untuk layanan tingkat kabupaten dan kecamatan yang diberikan pada mereka; peran Fasilitator Desa dan apa yang dapat diharapkan dari mereka dalam kaitannya dengan dukungan dan frekuensi kunjungan; status Sekretaris Desa di masa depan sebagai karyawan desa atau pegawai negeri sipil. Sebagai tambahan, **Kepala Dusun berbagi bahwa mereka merasa tidak tahu banyak mengenai Undang-Undang Desa** serta tidak tahu cara menjelaskan rencana, anggaran dan pengeluaran desa kepada konstituen mereka.

2) Apa yang diamati oleh tim peneliti...

Masyarakat memiliki sangat sedikit pengetahuan tentang Undang-undang Desa dan apa arti perubahan-perubahan tersebut, serta potensi keikutsertaan mereka. Studi ini, serta studi-studi RCA sebelumnya, telah mencatat bahwa sebagian besar masyarakat memiliki akses terhadap TV dan ini merupakan media yang berpengaruh besar dalam sosialisasi. **Para generasi muda seringkali cukup terlibat dalam isu-isu Pemerintahan Desa** (lebih banyak dari pada generasi yang lebih tua) dan ingin memilih pemimpin yang berbeda, yang lebih muda, lebih berenergi, dengan keterampilan Teknologi Informasi dan bukan berasal dari dinasti elit yang telah mendominasi kepemimpinan desa di masa lalu. **Para penduduk desa tidak sadar bahwa mereka memiliki hak untuk dan dapat memengaruhi proses pengambilan keputusan desa.** Secara khusus, para pemuda berbagi perasaan frustrasi mereka atas kebutuhan mereka yang tidak diperhatikan. Sama halnya dengan memengaruhi proses pengambilan keputusan, **masyarakat tidak merasa mereka memiliki hak terhadap akuntabilitas Pemerintah Desa** mereka walau mereka seringkali menggerutu kepada kami dan sesama mereka. **Penduduk desa saat ini tidak membaca informasi yang ada di papan pengumuman dan pemberitahuan desa** dan juga tidak menyukai pertemuan-pertemuan formal serta lebih memilih **peluang-peluang informal** untuk mengetahui apa saja yang sedang terjadi di desa.

1

Introduction



This Report presents the main findings of the Reality Check Approach (RCA) study which was conducted in December 2015. It is designed to understand and gather insights from officials of village government on their early experiences of the implementation of the new Village Law which includes transferring dana desa (village funds) directly to villages. This study was commissioned by KOMPAK and implemented by the RCA+ project with financial support from the Government of Australia through both KOMPAK and the Knowledge Sector Initiative. The Report presents the main findings of the Reality Check Approach (RCA) study which was conducted in December 2015. It was designed to understand and gather insights from officials of village government on their experiences of implementation of the 2014 Village Law which includes transferring dana desa (village funds) directly to villages. This study was commissioned by KOMPAK and implemented by the RCA+ project with financial support from the Government of Australia through both KOMPAK and the Knowledge Sector Initiative.

The House of Representatives issued Law No. 6/2014, known as the Village Law, with the intention of accelerating the development of Indonesian villages and promoting the use of resources at village level. The Village Law itself is aligned with the third point of the *NAWA CITA* (Nine Priority Agendas of the current Government of Indonesia) which aims to develop Indonesia through decentralisation to villages. One of the most significant changes in this Village Law is the change in the role of village. The village now has increased autonomy from the central and provincial levels, shifting decision making to the village level. As a result, the village now has the autonomy to organize village government, development programmes and facilitate community empowerment by themselves.

Under the Village Law, funds are disbursed directly to each village from the state budget through the districts.² Each village is scheduled to receive around IDR 1 billion per year based on the 'formula' developed by the Government. The allocation 'formula' for Village Funds is based on 4 criteria: the total population of the village (25%), number of poor people in the village (35%), village area (10%), and the Geographic Difficulties Index (*Indeks Kesulitan Geografis*) (30%). These criteria are clearly

² Law No. 6/2014 on Village, art. 72 (1) (b)

stated in the Government Regulation No. 22/2015 (as a revision of the Government Regulation No. 60/2014), which is explained in detail in the Minister of Finance Regulation No. 93/2015 (later replaced by the Minister of Finance Regulation No. 247/2015). However, this formula is only applied to 10% of the Village Fund with the remaining 90% universally applied across all villages.

During preliminary meetings held in April 2015 with KOMPAK and partners, a range of main issues were highlighted which would benefit from further exploration through this RCA study. The study was designed to provide:

- Insights into the current perceptions and experiences in the implementation of Village Law from the perspective of village officials, specifically relating to:
 - a. Their understanding of the Village Law and its intentions at the village level, including: the different roles and responsibilities of those engaged in the village and from the sub-district and district; the village planning and development processes including administrative aspects and approvals; and authorities.
 - b. Capacity and preparedness of village leaders to effectively fulfil their responsibilities in the context of their changing role and responsibilities, their confidence, perceived adequacy of training and support provided and perceptions on the capacities of the Village Government.
 - c. Interactions and engagement with the village including experiences with community participation and engagement in the planning processes, support from external facilitators and other support.
- Better understanding of the experiences, challenges and information gaps in the capacity building programme implemented by the Directorate of Village Development, Ministry of Home Affairs after its first year from the perspective of village government officials, to inform the Ministry's discussions on plans for 2016 capacity support, targeting of training, and types of support required as well as socialization on the Village Law.

- Insights into areas for further exploration with village leaders who will be connected through a SMS survey to provide real-time data at the village level through support from the Ministry of Villages.

Structure of this report

This report begins with an overview of the Reality Check Approach (RCA) methodology, including adaptations made for this study as well as study limitations (section 2). The following section 3 presents the Findings and is divided into 10 subsections. The first subsection begins by outlining the **changing context** in the study villages, followed by a subsection on **introducing some of the Village Officials** in the study. The next subsection covers the **stresses and strains** the Village Officials shared related to their jobs since the Village Law was introduced. The next subsection describes the perceived **changing roles and responsibilities** that have emerged as a result of the Village Law. This is followed by a subsection on the **knowledge and understanding of the Village Law** and then reflections on the **training** and post training support provided. The next subsection covers the experiences in **adapting to the new procedures and processes** for accessing the Village Funds and then the **current village priorities** for using the funds. This is followed with a subsection on **community participation** in the Village Law and then on the perspectives on **accountability**. The report concludes with implications drawn from the perspectives and experience of Village Government Officials and their constituents for the implementation of the Village Law support programme.

2

Methodology



The Reality Check Approach (RCA) is a qualitative research approach involving trained and experienced researchers staying in people's homes for several days and nights, joining in their everyday lives and chatting informally with all members of the family, their neighbours and others they come into contact with. This relaxed approach ensures that power distances between researcher and study participants are diminished and provides the enabling conditions for rich insights into people's context and reality to emerge. By building on conversations, having multiple conversations with different people and having opportunities for direct experience and observation, confidence in the insights gathered is enhanced compared to many other qualitative research methods. RCA is often used to understand longitudinal change through staying with the same people at approximately the same time each year over a period of several years.

The Reality Check Approach differs from most other approaches to research. Firstly, it is not theory-based so that there are no preconceived research frameworks or research questions. This is deliberate as the approach seeks to enable emic (insider) perspectives to emerge and to limit etic (outsider) interpretation or validation. The premise for researchers is one of learning directly from people themselves. Secondly, RCA is always carried out in teams in order to minimise researcher bias and to optimise opportunities for triangulation. Thirdly, and importantly, RCA teams are independent and make this explicit with the people who participate in the study. Our objective is to ensure that the views, perspectives and experiences of people are respectfully conveyed to policy and programme stakeholders. The researchers become a conduit rather than an intermediary. This is why RCA studies do not provide recommendations but promote the idea of sharing implications which are grounded in what people themselves share and show us.

The approach builds on and extends the tradition of listening studies (see Salmen 1998 and Anderson, Brown and Jean 2012³) and beneficiary assessments

³Salmen, Lawrence F. 1998. "Toward a Listening Bank: Review of Best Practices and Efficacy of Beneficiary Assessments". Social Development Papers 23. Washington: World Bank.

Anderson, Mary B., Dayna Brown, Isabella Jean. 2012. Time to Listen; Hearing People on the Receiving End of International Aid. Cambridge MA:CDA.

(see SDC 2013⁴) by combining elements of these approaches with researchers actually living with people and sharing their everyday lives in context.

RCA is sometimes likened to a 'light touch' participant observation. But while it is similar in that it requires participation in everyday life within people's own environments, it differs by being comparatively quick and placing more emphasis on informal, relaxed and insightful conversations rather than on observing behaviour and the complexities of relationships. It also differs by deriving credibility through multiple interactions in multiple locations and collective pooling of unfiltered insights so that emic perspectives are always privileged.

Important characteristics of the Reality Check Approach are:

- **Living with** rather than visiting (thereby meeting the family/people in their own environment, understanding family/home dynamics and how days and nights are spent);
- **Having conversations** rather than conducting interviews (there is no note-taking thereby putting people at ease and on an equal footing with the outsider);
- **Learning** rather than finding out (suspending judgement, letting people take the lead in defining the agenda and what is important);
- **Centering on the household/place of residence** and interacting with families/people rather than users, communities or formalised groups;
- **Being experiential** in that researchers themselves take part in daily activities (helping out in the village office, cooking and house chores with the family) and accompanying people (to meetings, to market, to place of work);
- **Including** all members of households/living in units;
- **Using private space** rather than public space for disclosure (an emphasis on normal, ordinary lives);
- **Accepting multiple realities** rather than public consensus (gathering diversity of opinion, including 'smaller voices')
- **Interacting in ordinary daily life** with people

⁴Shutt, Cathy and Laurent Ruedin. 2013. SDC How-to-Note Beneficiary Assessment (BA). Berne: Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation.



(accompanying people in their interactions with local service providers and village government as they go about their usual routines);

- **Taking a cross-sectoral view**, although each study has a special focus, the enquiry is situated within the context of everyday life rather than simply (and arguably artificially) looking at one aspect of people's lives.

2.1 Locations and Study Participants Location

Commissioners of the study proposed districts for the study. Efforts were made to avoid over-researched locations. The study team reviewed districts by using the two criteria: lagging districts

Table 1: The eight study locations

Province	Study Location 1	Study Location 2
Aceh	Independent	Underdeveloped
Central Java and East Java	Developing, Woman Village Head	Underdeveloped
South Sulawesi	Underdeveloped	Developing, Woman Village Head
West Nusa Tenggara	Underdeveloped	Independent village

Table 2: Profile of village locations

Village	Official categorisation*	Rural/periurban	No HH	Total population	No. dusuns	Main livelihood	Dominant religion	Woman Village Head
A3	independent	Peri-urban	103	4-450	-	Rice farming	Islam	
NT3	independent	Rural	3,000	6,000	11	Rice farming	Islam	
CJ2	developing	Peri-urban	800	3,500	8	Wage labour	Islam	✓
SS2	developing	Peri-urban, coastal	190	1,300	3	Fish farming	Islam	✓
EJ1	Under-developed	Rural	500	3,200	8	Sugar cane farming	Islam	
SS1	Under-developed	Rural	1,800	5,000	6	Rice farming	Islam	
A1	Under-developed	Rural	30	150-200	3	Rubber plantation	Islam	
NT1	Under-developed	Peri-urban	3,300	5,700	17	Rice farming	Islam	

* Village Development Index, 2014, Bappenas

and non-lagging districts based on the circular letter No. 2421/Dt.7.2/04/2015 from *Bappenas*. The study team also assessed the reported revenue of the proposed districts to ensure a diverse range of study locations.

Specific villages were selected based on the *Indeks Pembangunan Desa 2014* (Village Development Index, 2014) published by *Bappenas* which identifies the following categories:

- Independent village
- Developing village
- Underdeveloped village

To this, the team added the inclusion of at least two villages with woman Village Heads. A total of 8 locations were selected.

After the field work, we categorised the villages as peri-urban or rural based on observations and insights from people themselves. The peri-urban locations are:

- One in South Sulawesi (SS2), 15 minutes drive from the sub-district on the main road, and comprising a mix of farmers, construction workers, small traders and civil servants although the main industry is fish ponds and nearly every household owns one. It is a developing village.
- The Central Java village (CJ2), 15 minutes motorbike drive from the sub-district. Here people used to be rice farmers but since facing acute water shortages have turned to tree

plantations for the paper and plywood industry. Many work in factories which line the road into the sub-district and others migrate overseas for work. People felt that there were many job opportunities in the locality.

- The third is in Aceh (A3) and is extremely small. It is considered peri-urban because it is about 40 minutes drive from the sub-district with frequent transportation options. Although the livelihood is mainly high yield rice farming on extensive plains (and is categorised as 'independent'), many are also engaged in construction and work in the sub-district. The village has many underlying tensions which result in asymmetrical development.
- The fourth is in NTB (NT1), 30 minutes along a good tarmac road from the district capital. It is a very large village with mostly brick houses and diverse livelihoods including rice and vegetable farming, salt mining, brick making, timber plantations, gold mining, tourism (easy access to Bali) and many international migrant workers. Although officially categorised as underdeveloped, it does not present as such.

Four villages are categorised as rural:

- One is in remote Aceh (A1) and proved very difficult to find along an extremely poor road. It is a very small village 1.5 hours motorbike ride from the sub-district and is amidst uncultivated jungle/forest. Most people grow rubber trees

● The smallest village in our study, Aceh



on their own land and are also employed in palm oil plantations.

- The second in Sulawesi (SS1) is considered one of the most remote villages in the area, set amidst hills and taking at least one hour of travel to the district capital on a poor road. People are farmers for their own consumption offering surplus corn for sale. They also cultivate teak wood and trade horses. The election for the Village Head was taking place while the team was there.
- The third in NTB (NT3) is about a one-hour drive from the provincial capital along a good road, but it is fully rural in terms of livelihoods with people mostly involved in single crop, rain-fed paddies and involving some international migrant workers.
- The fourth is in East Java (EJ1), some 1.5 hours from the district capital at the edge of mountains. Livelihoods are mostly based on irrigated agriculture, including sugar cane, tobacco, peanut, maize and chilli. Many people also depend on international migration especially to Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Thailand. In some ways this location can be regarded as 'in transition' to a more urbanised one as people get work in waged construction. A bank and supermarket have recently opened.

The Study Team

The study team comprised 25 researchers, including three international researchers and 22 Indonesian researchers (see Annex 1) working in teams of four to five members. Two international researchers were accompanied by Indonesian researchers/translators while the other is fluent in *Bahasa Indonesia*. All researchers and researchers/translators had participated in a full Level 1 RCA training which emphasises the good practice of reflexivity, understanding and mitigating bias, maintaining informality and ethical considerations in conducting this kind of work. The researchers are predominantly young enthusiastic 'people persons' from a broad range of academic backgrounds including: anthropology, sociology,

Table 3: summary of study participant numbers

Host households		Focal Households	Others (see Annex 2)
Village Officials	Villagers		
7 Village Heads*	14 HH	>90 HH	>2600 people Including 162 Village Officials
2 BPD members			
3 Village Secretaries			
2 Sub-Village Head			
2 Ex-officials 1 Adat leader			

*one Village Head did not live in the village, although we had intensive interactions with him when he came to the village in the afternoons and evenings

political sciences, journalism, law, arts and sciences. All researchers are required to undergo Child Protection training and understanding. Signing the Child Protection Policy and Data Protection policies are mandatory. The seven sub-teams were led by experienced Indonesian RCA practitioners and one sub team was led by an international RCA practitioner.

Study Participants

The study focused on three key types of participant; host households (where researchers lived), focal households (immediate neighbours of host households) and everyday interactions with a range of other people mostly those with whom the host households interacts (see Table 3). A full list of people met during the study is provided in Annex 2.

The researchers entered communities independently on foot in order to keep the process 'low key' and then spent time in the communities getting to know the community, being known and making clear our purpose before negotiating access to particular homes where they stayed for a minimum of four days and nights.

a. Host Households

The primary focus of the study were the host households. A total of thirty-one households were included, comprising about 90 people with whom the team had intensive conversations and interaction. As indicated in Table 3, some of these host households were Village Officials (17) and some were villagers from the wider community (14). Some focal households were also Village Officials.

None of the households were contacted in advance of the study in order to ensure that they did not make special arrangements for the researchers. Rather, all host households were found by individual team members through informal discussions with people in the community (e.g. at teashops) *in situ*. Care was taken to ensure that people understood the nature of the RCA and the importance of not being afforded guest status. The selected households were located at least 15 minutes walk from each other and, where possible, even further away to ensure interaction with a different constellation of neighbours and other community members.

Each team member discretely left a 'gift' for each family (host household) on leaving, to the value of about IDR 300,000 to compensate for any costs incurred in hosting the researcher. As researchers insist that no special arrangements are made for them, they help in domestic activities and do not disturb income-earning activities, the actual costs to 'hosts' are in fact negligible. The timing of the gift was important so people did not feel they were expected to provide better food for the researchers or give the impression that they were being paid for their participation.

b. Neighbours (focal households)

In the course of the study, team members interacted closely with over 90 neighbouring households (on average about 3-4 additional households). These covered a mix of Village Officials and villagers.

c. Other community members

In addition, the teams had further opportunistic conversations with other members of the community, including villagers, other members of Village Government, teachers and religious leaders

(see Annex 2 for List of People Met). This amounted to a further 2,600 people including 162 Village Officials.

2.2 Study areas for conversation

As noted above, RCA is not a theory based research method although it often generates people's theories of change and contributes well to grounded theory approaches. It does not have a pre-determined set of research questions relying as it does on iterations from insights gathered *in situ* and building on progressive series of conversations. However, as part of the briefing process for researchers, areas for conversations were developed to act as a guide to ensuring that conversations are purposive. The outcome of the deliberations with the research team are provided in Annex 3: Areas for Conversation.

2.3 Post field processes

Whilst researchers never take notes in front of people, they do jot down quotes and some details in field notebooks as needed. Each sub team of three to four researchers who have been in the same village but have not met during their stay in the village spent at least a full day de-briefing with the team leader as soon as they come out of the village. This involves sharing all their conversations, observations, experiences related to the areas for conversation as well as expanding the areas for conversation based on people's inputs. This process enables extensive triangulation as the same topics are explored through different researchers, from different people's perspectives, from different locations, times and research methods (conversations, observations, direct experiences, use of visuals including photographs). The de-briefs are recorded in detail in written de-brief notes combined with other important archived material providing detail on households, villages and case studies as well as diagrams created with people and their photographs (often taken by the families themselves). Following completion of all sub team de-briefs, all sub teams meet together as one full team again for the first time since the briefing and are asked to take the position of study participants and identify emerging narratives from their studies. This process enables sense making and ensures that

researchers do not overlay their own interpretations on the findings. The senior team uses established framework analysis procedures involving three of the typical four stages process i. Familiarisation (immersion in the findings), ii, Identification of themes (from the sense making workshop and from the data directly) and iii. Charting (finding emerging connections). The conventional fourth step is 'interpretation' which we purposely eschew. The key emerging narratives from these processes are used as a basis for the report writing. Quality assurance is carried out through internal peer review with special concern to ensure the research retains positionality of people themselves.

2.4 Ethical considerations

RCA teams take ethical considerations very seriously especially considering the fact that it involves living with people in their own homes. Like most ethnographic based research, there is no intervention involved in RCA studies. At best, the study can be viewed as a way to empower study participants in that they are able to express themselves freely in their own space. Researchers are not covert but become 'detached insiders'. People are informed that this is a learning study and are never coerced into participation. As per American Anthropological Association Code of Ethics, RCA adopts an ethical obligation to people '*which (when necessary) supersedes the goal of seeking new knowledge*'. Researchers '*do everything in their power to ensure that research does not harm the safety, dignity or privacy of the people with whom they conduct the research*'. All researchers are briefed on ethical considerations and Child Protection Policies before every field visit (irrespective of whether they have previously gone through this). All researchers sign Code of Conduct on Confidentiality and Child Protection Policy declarations as part of their contracts. All data (written and visual) is coded to protect the identity of individuals, their families and communities. As a result the exact locations and identities of households and others are not revealed in this report.

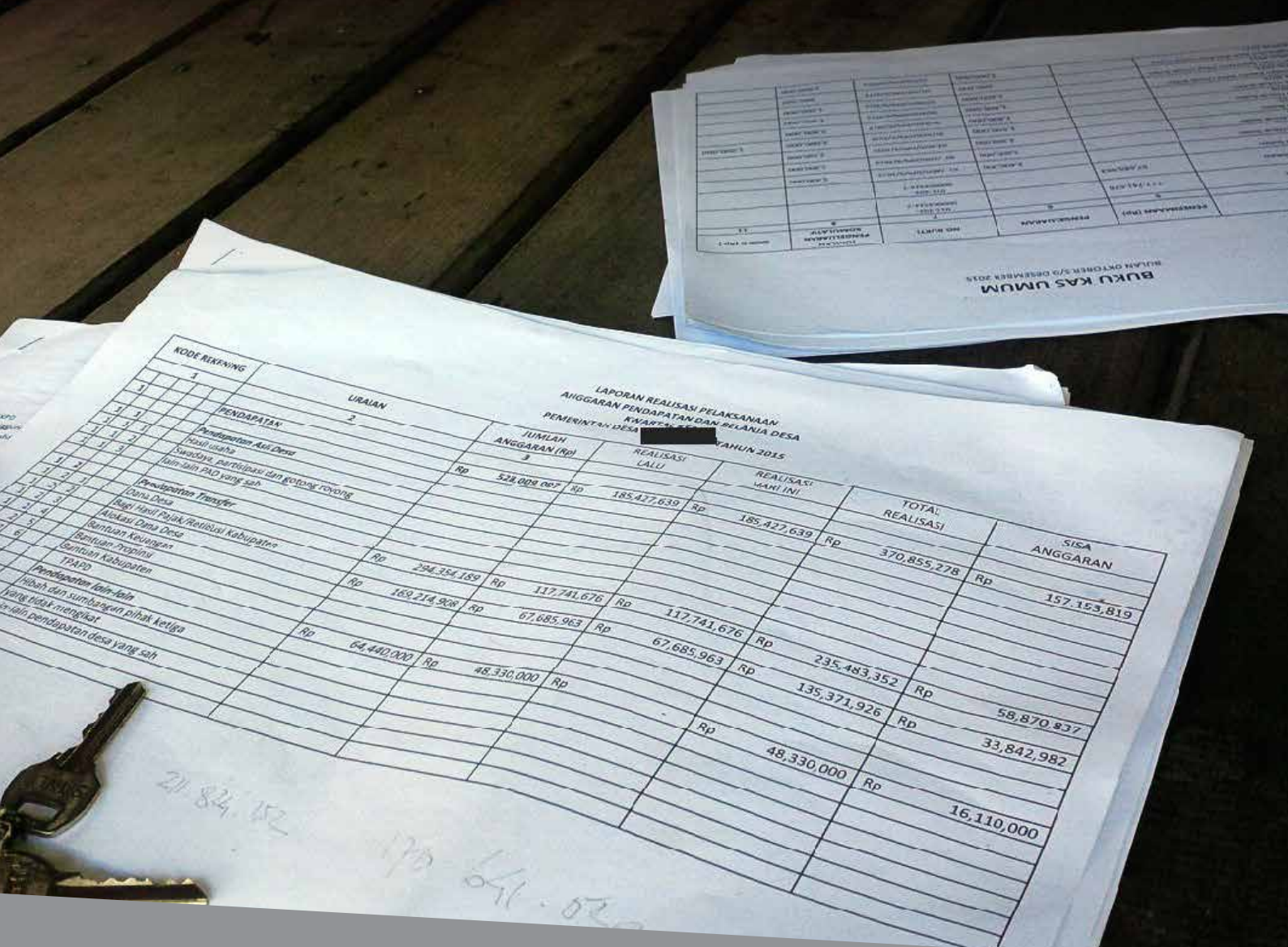
2.5 Study limitations

As with other research methods, this study has a number of limitations as follows:

- Local language barrier. Use of local languages was an issue in all of the eight villages. Even in informal conversations between the village/sub-village elites, some struggled to speak *Bahasa Indonesia*. This resulted in some lost opportunities to actually follow what each person said in detail. Asking for a translated summary during conversation could be disruptive so researchers often settled for post-conversation summaries by those who were most fluent in *Bahasa Indonesia*. Researchers also encountered some language barriers when they met old people in particular as many could not speak *Bahasa Indonesia* at all.
- For those researchers who stayed with Village Heads, this affected the interactions they had with other people as people provided more guarded answers and were less open to conversations. This was offset by the study design which purposely included researchers who lived with other villagers and were able to provide triangulation of findings this way.
- Some village government officers and even Village Heads lived outside of the village. In one village the Village Head who lived outside the village never came to the Village Office during this study. The researcher only met him in the middle of the night when he undertook security visits. In other locations the village officials that study members lived with were very busy which also limited the hours of contact and the depth of conversations.
- The road access in some locations was impassable to vehicles. In the small remote village in Aceh, researchers had to walk 8 km of muddy road, which we understand is inaccessible during the rainy season. In South Sulawesi we experienced some problems locating the study village as local information was contradictory and heavy rains compounded the problem.

- There were pre-existing tensions in two villages and these were poorly covered in the local news or by our information gathering efforts before the study. This led to some problems entering these communities. Another village was in the process of conducting their Village Head election. Whilst this provided important insights into how this is managed, ordinary interactions and observations of village governance were partially compromised.

Findings



BUKU KAS UMUM
BULAN OKTOBER 2019
DESEMBER 2019

NO. URUT	NO. MURTI	PERINGKATAN	PERINGKATAN (Rp)	PERINGKATAN (%)
1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45
46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55
56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75
76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85
86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95
96	97	98	99	100

LAPORAN REALISASI PELAKSANAAN
ANGGARAN PENDAPATAN DAN BELANJA DESA
PEMERINTAH DESA [REDACTED] TAHUN 2015

KODE REKENING	LIBAIAN	JUMLAH ANGGARAN (Rp)	REALISASI LALU	REALISASI MAHI INI	TOTAL REALISASI	SISA ANGGARAN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
PENDAPATAN						
Pendapatan Asli Desa		528.008.007	185.427.639	185.427.639	370.855.278	157.153.819
- Hasil usaha						
- Sumbangan, partisipasi dan gotong royong						
- Lain-lain PAD yang sah						
Pendapatan Transfer						
- Dana Desa		294.354.189	117.741.676	117.741.676	235.483.352	58.870.837
- Bagi Hasil Pajak, Retribusi Kabupaten						
- Alokasi Dana Desa		169.214.908	67.685.963	67.685.963	135.371.926	33.842.982
- Bantuan Keuangan						
- Bantuan Propinsi						
- Bantuan Kabupaten						
- 174DD		64.440.000	48.330.000	48.330.000	48.330.000	16.110.000
Pendapatan Lain-lain						
- Hibah dan sumbangan pihak ketiga yang tidak mengikat						
- Lain-lain pendapatan desa yang sah						

21.824.152
170 641.020

3.1 Changing Context

The study villages vary enormously, with the smallest having only 30 households to the largest, comprising 3,300 households. No matter what the size, each has the same village governance structure with the same responsibilities to the community and almost the same amount of Village Funds to administer. Villages are not finite entities. The study reveals that they are often in a state of flux resulting from many factors including population growth, increased inter-connectedness with urban centres and new Village Government regulations. Two of the study villages were recently created after being separated from the previous rapidly growing village. For example in NTB, the former village was split into three new villages in 2010 due to the increased population. The village we lived in has a population of more than 5,500 people and 3,300 households and is sub-divided into 17 sub-villages. 8 of the sub-villages only recently formed and have not yet appointed their Sub-Village Heads and have not yet been formally recognised by the Village Office. The other village in NTB was subdivided ten years ago as the allocation of funds was not sufficient to accommodate the growing population. Ten years later, this division between the villages is still not clear.

In the past, there were 200 households in our smallest village when outsiders settled in the village in Aceh. During the conflict period they fled and one sub-village is now completely abandoned. The total number of households is now only 30, although the Village Head maintains there are 200 households and accesses various support on this basis. He explained to us that there is a plan in 2016 for 126 more families to come into the village to work on a new palm oil plantation. The Village Head says the *'village is way too remote, it is nearly inaccessible... so the people from outside the village would never know'*.

These examples exemplify the concern of the Village Office to ensure that the administrative data related to the village is updated. One Village Head in Sulawesi explained that, *'there are special criteria for receipt of the Village Funds such as population, topography and the percentage of poor, however the data used for this is out of date'*. As others corroborated, a lot of time and energy is going into

1

What's the use of collecting data all the time?

'We just do not understand how the departments in the central government work. We have been requested to update data every month and every year but none of the programmes seem to be based on the data that we sent,' shared the Village Head.

'When the government launched the BLSM [Bantuan Langsung Sementara Masyarakat] programme, we were only given a list of those entitled to this. This list was sent to us in the afternoon, and the next morning all Village Heads were summoned to the District for data reconciliation with their own list. When I shared the final list with the villagers, they were so upset as many of them were not listed. We were only able to say that the data is from central government and could not explain it. When I returned to the District to do the final verification I heard that another Village Head had died from a heart attack brought on by dealing with protesters in his village.'

'And further proof that the data we send is never used by central government is when we received a Jamkesmas Card for a man in my village who had passed away almost 4 years ago. We all laughed about it. Laughed but felt sad as our hard work was not appreciated by our government. We send birth, death and lots of other data regularly to central government.'

Field Notes, Village Head, Sulawesi

updating village data yet it seems that sometimes this is in vain as the old data is still being used (see Box 1). Furthermore, allowances are not provided by the district to undertake these additional data gathering tasks (see Box 2).

The data provided is also subject to restrictions. For example, a Bupati explained that *'you are not allowed to increase the number of people in poverty in your village, even though the price of seaweed has gone down and more people experience poverty'*. Generally, Village Officials indicated that context specific factors needed greater appreciation in the

allocation of Village Funds. As pointed out by one of the Village Offices in Aceh *'the Village Law is equally distributed between villages, but this is not context specific. Clearly in a remote area the costs will be different'*.

The way villages are defined and classified is also open to local interpretation. As explained by one Village Head in Aceh, *'the village may fit the criteria of village based on Acehnese perspectives but not those of the Village Law. Here, in order to be categorized as a village it must have at least one munasah'*. Our researchers, who were not informed of the village classifications before living in the villages (to avoid any preconditioned expectations and biases) were often surprised when debriefed and told the actual village categorisations (i.e. developing, under-developed and independent as per the Village Development Index 2014). For example, one village that is classified as an independent seed self-sufficient village, is receiving paddy seeds as aid from the district agricultural office. Each household receives 7.5kg of seeds and 10kg of fertiliser.

Burdensome demands from 'above'

Acting on a request from the district to update the village level family planning data, the Village Head had engaged five cadres, promising them the IDR 300,000 remuneration which was allocated for this from the district. *'Collecting this data was yet another burden for my staff. We are always being asked to do this sort of thing by the central government'*. This work was completed months before yet there had been no payment. The Village Head came to hear from a contact in the District Office that the payment had been made. The Village Head phoned the District Unit Head to ask what had happened to the allowances. At first he prevaricated but when the Village Head said she would complain to the *Bupati*, he agreed to disburse the money. *'All this work and then they withhold the allowances!'* They had still not received these when I left the village.

Field Notes, Village Head and Village Office Staff, Sulawesi



- Paddy seeds received as aid from the District Agricultural Office in the village that is officially classified as independent seed self-sufficient

3.2 Introducing Some of the Village Officials in the Study

Meet Some of the Village Heads

Across all 8 locations, people shared that the role of the Village Heads has increased in importance and maintaining connections at district and sub-district levels are key. This means there is less time and appetite for community engagement and this activity has devolved to Sub-Village Heads. Many Village Heads also shared the strains of the increased workload and how this was impacting their health and families.



◀ The 33 year old Village Head actually comes from another village but he married a local woman three years ago. He is a palm oil farmer and recently planted 7,000 new trees in his newly fenced land. He is widely respected as a **traditional healer** with many people visiting him for help even from other villages. They seek help with both physical and psychological problems including broken relationships, love affairs and psychosis. He gives them blessings and never asks for remuneration. He is a strong family man always bringing his young daughter to every event in the village, even important village meetings. He dotes on his daughter often showering her with extravagant gifts which others in the village cannot afford. Some of these things were stolen recently. (A1)

She is married to the former PNPM Village facilitator who has since become the Village Secretary in another village. She had been a member of the PKK before and asked permission from her family and other village elders to run for election. They agreed, indicating that they wanted either her or her husband to run for election. (SS2)



◀ This Village Head is part of the elite family in the village and people say he was elected only because of these ties. His brother says he was very lazy at school and even at election time did little campaigning, visiting just two sub-villages. The family put him forward for this role to maintain the family dynasty. He is described as a quiet, humble man who rarely interacts with the community. He had previously been a **PNPM Village facilitator** and so is regarded as 'knowing how to manage things' and 'has good networks'. (NT3)

He is described as **young** and handsome by many in the village. He is only 32 and, although separated from his wife and two young children, is seen as a role model for his volunteer work, his earlier village activism and because he does not smoke. He was a former mathematics teacher and self-funded his University course. People think he is very approachable and is a dedicated leader. (NT1)

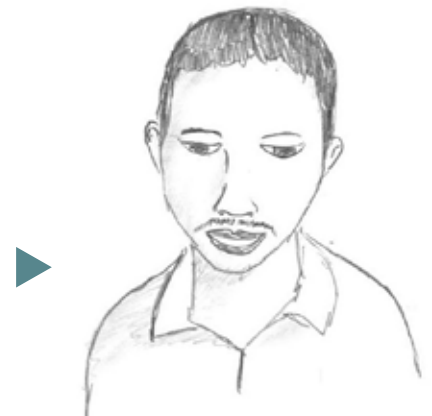


Table 4: Profile of the Village Heads

Location	Age	M/F	Yrs in office	Education level (highest)	Lives in village Y/N	Other livelihoods	Religion	Relation to current/ previous Village Head
A3	50s	M	6 years, first 2 years as stand in	SMA	Yes, but has another house in different village.	Rents out land (1 hectare). Owns water filter company. Rents out power tiller. Fish pond. Loans.	Islam	No
NT3	43	M	2 years	SMA	Yes, but in a villa apart from main village	Pays people to farm his land. Regarded as very rich <i>'my mother gives away rice & my grandparents had many water buffalos'</i>	Islam	Related to earlier Village Heads. Brother of former Village Secretary
CJ2	46	F	8 years	SMA	Yes	Cultivates and rents out <i>Tanah Bengkulu</i> land.	Islam	Her grandfather and father . Previously married to another Village Head . Brother is also a Village Head.
SS2	45	F	8 years	SMA but since second election has taken BA	Yes	Owens fishpond. Husband is Village Secretary in another village	Islam	No
SS1*	40	M	2 years	University	Originally from village but lives outside and rarely visits	Farms – sells maize. Has a PNS salary as was appointed directly by Bupati .	Islam	No
NT1	32	M	1 ¾ years	University	Yes	Volunteer Mathematics teacher in Islamic SMP on weekends. Mahogany and teak trees.	Islam	No
A1	33	M	2 years	SMA	Yes	Rents out one room in his house as Village Office (rent paid from ADD). 2.5 hectares of palm oil. Traditional healer	Islam	No
EJ1	Late 30s	M	2.5yrs	SD	No, lives in other village but has a house here too	12 hectares of <i>Tanah Bengkulu</i> leased out to private sugar company.	Islam	No

*Village Head does not live in the village, although we had intensive interactions with him when he came to the village in the afternoons and evenings.

Vignettes: A 'Day in the Life' of Village Heads

She wakes up usually in around 6-7 am to get her small son ready and leaves for the Village Office around 8 or 9 am. She stays there between 2 and 3 hours depending on the workload. Sometimes she takes her son to the kindergarten. Regularly at noon, she goes to pick her daughter up from Junior High School. Then she takes some rest. She visits the new road construction mid-afternoon and then stays at home busy with washing clothes and helping to cook. She spends her evenings chatting with the family but she also has many wedding invitations to attend. She usually goes for a while only (CJ2)

The Village Head is not originally from the village but moved here after his marriage some 20 years ago. They have two daughters, the eldest is in University, and the younger one is in High School. While we were with the family the girls never stayed at home, preferring to stay at the other house owned by their father in the next village, where his land is located. He has been Village Head for six years with the first two years as a stand-in. In the mornings he goes to his rice fields in the neighbouring village, comes home for lunch and afternoon prayer. As elsewhere in the sub-district, there is no Village Office so he spends his afternoons on village administration from his own house (A3).

In the mornings, The Village Head usually goes to his oil palm plantation. Twice per month he gets up early to attend *safari subuh* (collective prayer) in another village and once per fortnight he attends *Majelis Taklim* (koran learning group) in other villages. This is obligatory for all Village Heads. After returning from the plantation, he enjoys his hobby of hunting, usually hunting birds until dusk. At night, he welcomes guests to his house often until midnight. They sit and chat about many things from economic development, village budget allocation to special cases that the Sub Village heads are facing (A1).

We stayed with 7 Village Heads (two of whom are women) as indicated in Table 4, and interacted intensely with the other Village Head who lived in a nearby village and came to his village every afternoon / evening.

All but one have SMA or higher qualifications and all but one live in the village. All have significant alternative income sources, which includes renting out *tanah bengkok* (village land) which has been shared among the Village staff for farming or, in one case, to a private company. All but three of the Village Heads live in new brick or concrete houses, generally described by villagers as '*the biggest in the village*' and some have more than one house. The other three include two in Sulawesi who have large two storied wooden traditional stilt houses. The third, in deep rural Aceh, owns one of the largest wooden houses in the village. All are well equipped with furniture and cable or satellite TVs. Only two of the Village Heads are related to the previous Village Heads.



Village Secretary overseeing the construction of the the new drainage system

Meet Some of the Village Secretaries

People shared that Village Secretaries are increasingly relied upon by the Village Heads to lead all village administration. They not only manage the increased paperwork associated with the Village Law but, because of accountability concerns, are increasingly becoming the only one to sign off proposals, budgets and receipts of funds.

We spent time with eight Village Secretaries, staying with three of them, and having extended conversations with all the Village Secretaries when possible.

The Village Secretaries are mostly slightly older than the Village Heads reflecting the longer tenure permitted. New appointments are young people, who are often preferred as they are more likely to be computer literate, a much prized skill since the introduction of the Village Law. Like the Village Heads, they too have alternative income sources. Also living in relatively good houses, on the whole these are much more modest than those of the Village Head.

This Village Secretary has been in the post for 30 years and was already too old to become a civil servant when the regulations permitted this. He is regarded by the other Village Officers as **'very good and has lots of experience'**. He is the only one who can input data on the laptop computer and is therefore relied upon for this. He is known as the one *'who has all the details'* of budgets and plans. People say the woman Village Head he now serves just provides *'pen and stamp'* as she totally depends on the Village Secretary. (CJ1)



He is only 22 years old and has been in post only 6 months. The *Camat* encouraged the Village Head to use the 'new powers under the Village Law' to appoint someone himself. He wanted someone who was young and computer-literate. The Head felt this young man who is currently studying computer science at University was the smartest in the village and appointed him. Others fear he does not have enough experience in administration and because of his ongoing studies, he is rarely available in the Village Office. (NT3)

Table 5: Profiles of Village Secretaries

Location	Age	M/F	Yrs in office & status	Education level (highest)	Lives in village Y/N	Other livelihoods	Religion	Relation to current/ previous Village Head
A3	30s	M	4 years, not PNS	University	Yes	Farming	Islam	No- but appointed by Village Head
NT3	22	M	6 months, not PNS	Currently at university	Yes	None but get family support	Islam	No
CJ2	55	M	30 years, Not PNS	SMA	Yes	Farming, including office land provided	Islam	Served Village Head's father and grandfather before.
SS2	40s	M	1 year (from other village, transferred), PNS	SMA	No	Salary only	Islam	No , appointed by Bupati
SS1	37	M	14 years, PNS	University	Yes	Farming- owns much land .Wife runs biggest chemical fertiliser shop in village.	Islam	Yes, to former Village Head who selected him 14 years ago.
NT1	50s	M	6 years, PNS	SMA	Yes	Wife sells snacks at paud (pre school)	Islam	Not known
A1	30s	M	2 years, PNS	SMP	partly	Clove cultivation in original village	Islam	Originates from same area as former Village Head
EJ1	58	M	28 years, PNS	SD	Yes	Farming, selling fuel	Islam	Relative of former Village Head who appointed him.



● The largest village in our study area, NTB

Meet Some of the BPD Members

The BPD's role, function and presence are the most contested and are a source of confusion across all the villages. Within all the study villages, the BPD members shared that they felt they had limited-to-no-power, even if they wanted to fulfil their role in oversight and accountability.

We stayed with two BPD members and interacted with many others through opportunistic meetings during the study.

The BPD members are generally older and earn recognition of their role less on their educational background and more on their commitment to the village. Only two had previous relations with the Village Head and two had been PNPM employees in the past.



This is the second time he has led the BPD. In 2006 he served for 7 years, then had a break of two years and was re-elected in September 2015. He is not originally from this village but moved from an island to start clove farming in late 1998, soon after his son was born, as it was difficult in his own village. His now teenage son stays in town to attend Senior High School during the week because of the terrible roads to the village. He currently continues to farm rubber and palm trees. He was elected to the BPD because he represents those, like him, who moved from the islands. This is important since the village comprises of other incomers from Java and Aceh. He is well respected and lauded for his contributions to village development. He explained that there is not very much for the BPD to do on a regular basis. They have quarterly meetings with the Village Office staff to discuss the progress of programmes, future programmes and to resolve conflicts among villagers. He mostly spends his days chatting to neighbours in his wife's kiosk. (A1)

He is 52 years old and has been the Head of the BPD since 2012. Prior to this he was the Sub-Village Head between 2000-2008. Active within the community, he previously stood on several community committees, either as the head or a member. This included the election committee, farmer's groups and forest conservation committees. He graduated from an Islamic University in the provincial capital and also teaches at the Madrasah school in the village. Amid his busy schedule, he also finds time to manage the Islamic Paud and to farm where he grows paddy and soybean. He has 5 children and 8 grandchildren. Two of his children live in the same village whilst the others have moved away (NTB).

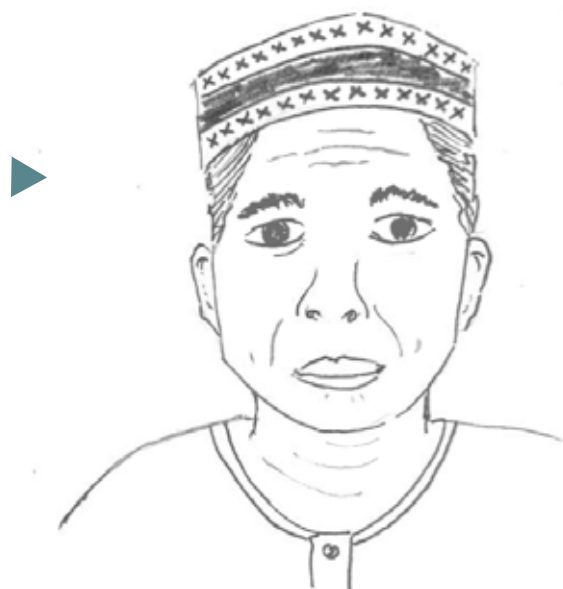


Table 6 : Profile of BPD Officials

Location	Age	M/F	Yrs in office	Education level (highest)	Lives in village Y/N	Other livelihoods	Religion	Relation to current/previous Village Head
NT3	49	M	Since 2012	SMA	Yes	Madrasah teacher, livestock rearing	Islam	No
SS2	45	F	5 years	SMP	Yes	Seaweed farming, sea fishing (fish and crab) Fish ponds Sub-Village Head income	Islam	Husband is Sub-Village Head. Ran against Village Head
CJ2	49	M	10 years ('03-'13)	University	Yes	Wife runs kiosk, loan provider (gives loans daily), rice mill owner. Former furniture factory owner. Former PNPM facilitator	Islam	Wife is a high school friend of Village Head and lent her money for the election.
NT1	36	M	Since 2010	SMA	Yes	Former PNPM administrator, former construction worker in Bali, wife sells snacks – small kiosk	Islam	No
A1	55	M	2004-13 and now again in 2015	SMP	Yes	Rubber & palm oil, clove cultivation in original village, kiosk owner	Islam	No
EJ1	50	M	4 years	SD	Yes	Speeches at religious events, kiosk in front of house.	Islam	No

Vignettes: A 'Day in the Life' of a Sub-Village Head

His days during this local election period have been a bit busier than usual. This election has already been delayed twice this year. He is a farmer by day and campaign manager by night. This is the height of the planting season and he also has his usual responsibilities as the Sub-Village Head.

With 2 hectares to plant, he has hired two men to do most of the work, especially the ploughing and spraying. During two days of my stay, the whole family - mother, father and two daughters (11 and 17), spent more than four hours each morning at the farm, helping with fertilising the young corn plants while 'my father' helped with the ploughing.

In the afternoons, after lunch, 'my father' socialised

with neighbours most of whom were relatives or held discussions with fellow elites in other sub-villages. Each evening we discussed these interactions over dinner. After dinner and Isya prayer the living room filled with guests who had come to discuss the campaign strategy. These invariably lasted until 2 or 3 am. Then 'my father' rose for Shubuh prayer at 4am (SS1).



● An informal discussion taking place at a gazebo after musholla, NTB

Introducing the Village Governments in the Study

Village Government is fairly similar across the different locations comprising an elected Village Head, appointed Village Secretary and Treasurer as the core with a number of sector leads (which varied in different locations to include development, governance, general affairs, social welfare, agriculture, and finance). Some Village Governments told us that they regarded the BPD as part of the village government while others did not. Some others include Sub-Village Heads and some also include religious leaders. The inclusion/exclusion seems largely to do with whether they get a salary or allowance from the Village Funds rather than their role.

We found Village Offices in all the locations to have many staff, at least 11 and up to 20 staff. There seems to be no correlation between the number or roles of staff and the size of the village, context or individual village needs; our smallest village (just 30 households) has 20 staff whilst one of our largest

village (3,000 households) has the least number of staff of only 11. In several villages people said that it is important to have a village office official appointed from each sub-village to assist with disseminating information and this partly determined the size of the village staff.

The salary structure varies considerably between villages (see Table 7), with large proportions of the *Alokasi Dana Desa* (ADD) funds being utilised on the salaries and allowances for the village officials. In one village the treasurer estimated that 70% of the ADD funds are spent on salaries with just 30% on the operational funds. The total annual salary bill in NT3 equated to over IDR 170 million, which is nearly twice that of the salary costs in the smallest village even though the latter have twice as many staff. The payments for each position vary considerably. For example, the payments for Village Head ranged from IDR 1.1 million to IDR 5million per month.

Table 7: Some examples of different office staff payments (does not include potential income from 'tanah bengkok')

Village	Village head	Village Secretary	Treasurer	Village Sector heads	Sub Village Head	BPD	TPK	Imam	Other	Total No. Staff	Total Monthly Salaries	Total Annual Salaries
NT3	5 m	1 m	1 m	1 m x 5	-	very small allowance	-	-	Assistant treasurer 500K + 900K (2others)	11	14.3 m	172 m
SS1	3 m	350K	450K	4 x 400K	6 x 1,3 m		-	400K		14	13.6 m	163 m
A1	1.1 m	500K	900K	3 x 500K	3 x 330K	7x 125K	3x 500K	450K		20	7.8 m	94 m

m= million IDR
K= 1,000 IDR

- Difficult to read village demographic data on display in the village office

3.3 Stresses and Strains

The new Village Law is another change in a series of new challenges for Village Governments. This RCA study was undertaken within six months of the first disbursement of Village Funds under the auspices of the Village Law directly to villages. Everywhere we experienced anticipation mixed with concern and anxiety. Generally, village officials shared that they were uneasy and apprehensive. Most indicated that they were worried about *'getting things wrong'* and being culpable for their mistakes. These new challenges have far-reaching effects. The bigger picture and opportunities that the new regulation may bring for the village and Village apparatus is not being realised or understood by Village Officials. Rather the short term immediate burdens, regulations, compliance and obligations are highlighted. This apprehension and uncertainty is seen to be impacting motivations, work-loads and priorities for the community which are explored further in the next section.

Most Village Officials told us that they are well aware of the Village Law. But the overriding resultant perception was one of concern rather than opportunity for the village. They consistently shared their worry about the increasing responsibilities and burden. As one Village Head, echoing others, explained, *'when you become Village Head you have a bigger potential to do wrong than to do good'*. Another Village Head said, *'to become the Village Head is hard as everything that is to be done requires responsibility. Compared to previous Village Heads, I am much more busy'*. This sentiment was reiterated by another Village Head who explained that, *'I work 24 hours and for 7 days'* and that the work requires *'devotion to the cause'*. The increased funds were described by another Village Head's wife as, *'too much money and too complicated – we will get confused'*. These concerns have translated into a reluctance to continue in positions of authority and an unwillingness to continue to serve the community. Whereas, previously official positions were very much sought after, in particular by members of elite families, officials and their family members described the increased responsibility and burdens resulting from the Village Law as sapping their desire and willingness to seek these positions. The father of one Village Head in one of

our larger study villages, explained that he initially did not provide his blessing to support his son to contest the election. He was concerned that his son would be overwhelmed with requests from people and people's concerns, and not have any time for himself and his family (see Box 3).

Many other officials shared with us their reluctance to take on formal positions due to the increased burden and responsibilities. However, they felt that

3

A Father's concerns for his Village head son

He said, *'Even when he was an activist leader (before his time as Village Head), he was already busy all the time. I wondered how it will be if he really becomes the Village Head?'* He was concerned that becoming a Village Head would not guarantee a better income. *'How much is the salary of the Village Head? He would receive much more if he managed the family farm'*.

This father had a change of heart only when he realised that the villagers were pushing for his son to become the Village Head. He is one of five brothers, and none of the other brothers wished to become Village Head. As the eldest brother shared one morning in the *baruga* over breakfast, when asked if he would also consider being a Village Head *'Never! I get the same or more money than my brother as a construction worker in Bali, and it is much less stress. He is always busy and people come to him all the time'*.

The Village Head himself acknowledges a sense of *'pride'* and *'social status'* in this role, but that was it. The strain of the job has impacted on his family life and he has separated from his wife since becoming Village Head. People in the village blamed his wife for not being able to adjust to the new lifestyle, not being able to host guests, not being *'smart enough'*.

Our researchers also observed the strain of the job on his health with long tiring days filled with attending opening ceremonies, formal meetings at the district and regular informal meetings until late in the evening. During the four days the researcher stayed with him, it was very difficult to find opportunities for relaxed informal conversations as he was either running around the village attending meetings and ceremonies, or distracted by continuous phone calls, texts and impromptu visits until late into the evening. He indicated that it was because it was a particularly busy time of the year approaching the end of the year, but his brother said *'he is always this busy'*.

Field Notes, Youngest Village Head & family, NTB

'He is always busy and people come to him all the time'

(Brother of Youngest Village Head, NTB)

they were forced or felt obligated to take the positions. One Sub-Village Head, with whom one of our researchers stayed, is in his late 30s and is described as a former 'thug', was forced by the neighbourhood leader (RT) and community to become the Sub-Village Head. He initially refused to take the role and literally ran away to avoid the election. But the community went ahead and appointed him in his absence as they thought he would bring some security and protection to the sub-village (see Box 5).

Another Sub-Village Head from one of the villages in Sulawesi explained that when the elders offered him the position, he declined at first as he believed it would be a burden. He was then forced to reconsider as the elders implored that if he refused his bloodline would be excluded from such opportunities in the future. (see Box 6).

In another village it was the wife of the Sub-Village Head who tried to put a stop to her husband becoming the Head by threatening, *'if you run for election, I will leave you. You have to choose between being Sub-Village Head and me'*. Another Village Head's

The daily burden of being a Village Head

This Village Head is in his early 30s, a former activist and Mathematics teacher. He shared that he often has to attend ceremonies, weddings, and meetings in the sub-district and district. On our second day we accompanied him to a ground breaking ceremony for a *'mushola'* in the nearby sub-village. He also convened a meeting with the Sub-Village Heads after the ceremony to discuss local affairs. The next day he left early in the morning explaining that, *'I must attend a meeting held by the Provincial Fisheries Office'*. He didn't return until around 5pm and he went out again, this time to attend a wedding reception in another sub-village. Within his village there are 17 sub-villages and he said he frequently had to make visits for ceremonies and meetings.

He shared that he is getting tired and that he always keeps some vitamins in his pocket, especially vitamin C, *'I always drink this every day. It will keep my body strong'*. Often, at night, he will ask his brother to give him a massage. *'Especially, when I've had to drive the motorbike for hours'*. He still kept his mobile phone close by even during a massage, responding to numerous calls and texts.

On our last day, he drove off on his motorbike early in the morning to school. He used to teach full time at the school and now still finds time to volunteer there from time to time. Even though he is extremely busy, he has aspirations to share his knowledge and assist the youth.

Field Notes, Village Head, NTB



- The Village Head receiving a massage from his brother at the end of a long tiring day. He keeps his mobile phone close at hand to respond to the continuous calls and requests.

5



Basis for choosing new Sub-Village Head

The sub-village has recently been split in two and the old neighbourhood head (RT) refused to become the new Sub-Village Head, sharing, *'I would rather do my rice farming than have the headache of solving other people's problems. The burden is too big'*

The Village Head asked for nominations for this post but nobody came forward. Pak RT told me, *'Then we met together and finally suggested someone from the sub-village who is an ex-thug. He went to jail for 4 months, so we felt he could protect our sub-village'*. But when he was approached, he declined saying, *'I never dreamed to have this job, even though my great grandfather was a Sub-Village Head. I don't think I'm capable of doing this job'*.

He ran away to another village to avoid the run up to the election. The Village Head encouraged people to contribute towards the IDR 1.5 million registration fee for his candidature on his behalf. In the end, he was the only candidate. The Village Head announced his appointment and called him back. The people in the sub-village readily agreed to this saying that an ex-thug *'will protect us... and it is so easy to meet him in his house'*. Meeting him now, he told me he is now enjoying his role.

Field Notes, Sub-Village Head, NTB

wife in Java shared that she did not want her husband to continue his role as there is *'too much pressure, it's too difficult and you have to deal with too many people.'* Yet another Village Head's wife, who is not liked in the village as she is seen as very rude and anti-social, complained that she is afraid and jealous as her husband now needs to interact with too many other women. Whereas in Aceh, another family had pressured their family member to run for Village Head as the other candidates were from a different ethnicity and were perceived as *'greedy'*. He did not want to run as he felt the position involved too much travel and too much commitment, telling us, *'you become attached to your job'*. His family nevertheless convinced him and he is now appointed as Village Head. His sister-in-law complains that their family does not receive any benefits from his appointment as Village Head.

'If you run for election I will leave you'

(Wife of Village Head, NTB)

With increased responsibilities, one ex-Village Head in Java confided that it is important to plan for life after being in this position. The worst thing that can happen, he feels, is that you might be referred to as *'mantan'* (former) and people will still have expectations of you. (see Box 7). Obligations and responsibilities are assumed of those who are respected by the community and these can impinge on one's personal life. A wife of a former Village Secretary warned her husband not to become the Village Head. She felt that people already treat him like the Village Head and make demands of his time and feels this would only get worse if he actually became the Village Head (see box 8).

'Too much pressure, it's too difficult'

(Wife of Village Head, Java)

6

Pressure to be the Sub-Village Head

'Just over a year ago I was appointed Head of one of the six sub-villages in the village. The elders of my family offered me the position having considered a couple of other candidates. This seemed to me like a burden rather than a privilege, so I declined. But then the elders said, 'You can't refuse this. It would mean that your bloodline will be excluded from such opportunities in the future.' So I changed my mind and accepted the position. After all, my son is 5 years old now and, who knows if he wants to lead his people later. Anyway, nowadays, women can become leaders too... and I have two older daughters who may want to hold a leading position one day.

Field Notes, Sub Village Head, Sulawesi

The wider community shared that their demands for who makes a good Village Head were changing. Commonly, they said their Village Head must be close to the community, *'must give attention to daily life'* (farmer). Where this was not the case, people complained. For example in Sulawesi, people widely remarked about their Village Head that *'she used to be a very nice person'* before she came into power, but now she is *'grumpy and difficult to approach'*. A farmer shared with us that, *'the higher the power the more arrogant you can be'* and that he prayed for her when on *hajj* that she would revert to being a nice person. He explained further that, *'Ibu Village Head has become a policy maker like the President and is too far to reach – we can't talk to her anymore. Other Village Heads in other villages go to houses, she just passes by'*. Her husband also agrees that she has changed since being the Village Head and is now frequently *'angry on the telephone'* (see box 9).

By contrast in one of the villages in Java there are mixed feelings about the Village Head. He is *'adored'* by the community because, even though he lives in a different village some 3kms away with his wife, who is civil servant appointee at the health centre, he roams the village every evening *'on patrol'* as there have been problems with theft of livestock during the night. He is described by the villagers as *'very close to the community'*. However, his village office staff were not so keen

on his nocturnal visits as this was the only time he was available to sign documents. They have to SMS him and arrange to meet up with him during his patrol. One farmer summed the problem up, *'my cow can see the Village Head every night while I have to run around to find him'*.

The younger generation, in particular, often shared that there is a change in the attributes they wish to see in leaders. In some villages, the youth are rejecting the old traditions of electing leaders based on family ties and told us that leaders should be, *'just, fair, not one sided, interact more, open and honest'* (youth).

In one of the villages in Aceh, conversations with young seasonal workers revealed their hopes that leaders with these values might be finally elected in the future. As the youth shared, *'the previous*

7

Problems after completing time in office

'We have nothing left,' said the wife of ex-Village Head in my village. Her husband had been Village Head for ten years, *'but people still come and call him Pak Mantan'*, she said. Being *mantan*, people still expected him to solve problems, but Pak Mantan now has no position and less resources to fulfil peoples' expectations. *'We used to have tanah bengkok and a rice mill'* but they had to return the land to the village and it is now owned by the current Village Head. *'We even had to sell the rice mill to pay debts'*. Pak Mantan lost about IDR 150 million on the last election. An ex-Head of the BPD shared, *'the worst thing that can happen to someone in the village is to be a Mantan!'* He feels that a good ex-Village Head is the one who prepares for retirement. *'People expect Mantan to be rich'* so, a sensible Village Head must accumulate wealth by buying land and running several rice mills, during his term of office. He adds, *'And go for a pilgrimage before the end of the term, so people will call him: Pak Haji!'* But this former Village Head now works on the rice fields belonging to his extended family earning a daily wage, and his wife sells batik and sarongs to support their four children at school. *'We are poor now,'* she told me.

Field Notes, Wife of Ex-Village Head, ex BPD member, Java

Village Head did nothing for the village so we wanted a new one. But he does nothing either – we will now have to wait until the next election in 2016 when we will have a new leader who will come from our side. In fact the Camat has prohibited the current Village Head from standing again, having said, *‘the village development is not going anywhere –village government is not working’.*

Some changing trends emerged across locations suggesting a new kind of leadership might be emerging. Our researchers met in each location at least one ex-PNPM Village Facilitator who were either now in official positions or married to key officials. In half of the villages ex-PNPM Village Facilitators have recently become BPD members. In one the Village Head is an ex-PNPM Village Facilitator. The networks and linkages with the sub-district and district government that the ex-PNPM Village Facilitators have is probably one of the key assets that draws them to serving in the village apparatus. Additionally, constituents acknowledge and endorse the importance of these networks and contacts for the future development of the village.

8

Discouraged to Run for Election by Wife

The Village Secretary told me he had wanted to stand for election as Village Head but his wife was adamant that this would not be a good idea. She told him that he was already very busy with people coming to the house all the time and it would only get worse. As the current Village Head’s wife is reluctant to take part in village life and host the many visitors to the Village Head, the Village Secretary’s wife does much of this entertaining so she knows the potential burdens associated with Village Headship. She says the Village Head is always on the phone talking to the Camat. They also know that some of the Village Officials want to resign as they have become stressed since the introduction of the Village Law: managing so much money, the paperwork and the responsibility that comes with the job. If they leave the burden will only worsen.

Field Notes, Wife of Village Secretary, NTB

‘The family ties is something that has to be broken’

(Young teacher, echoing other Sulawesi)

9

The Stress of Being the Village Head

The Village Head I stayed with is regarded as a hard task master and expects her staff to be in the Village Office at 8am. She micromanages everything and people say this is because she thinks she is the only one with a University education and therefore takes over. She says she is constantly worried about inspections and doesn’t trust the others to get things right. On the Sunday I was staying there she summoned the key Village Officials early in the morning and they worked on the Village Law financial report until late at night. They had to prepare various statements and supporting documents and a lot of trouble trying to enter the data on the computer (asking for my help at times). The Village Head told me she often works this late. Early the next morning they submitted the report and she also had a morning meeting on health at the district. Her husband says she quarrels with everyone these days and puts it down to stress. He said even when people came to the Village Office to query the BLSM payments *‘all she did was shout at everyone’.* She says she feels overwhelmed by complaints. Asked about whether she would stand for election again she is equivocal but her husband says *‘enough is enough’.*

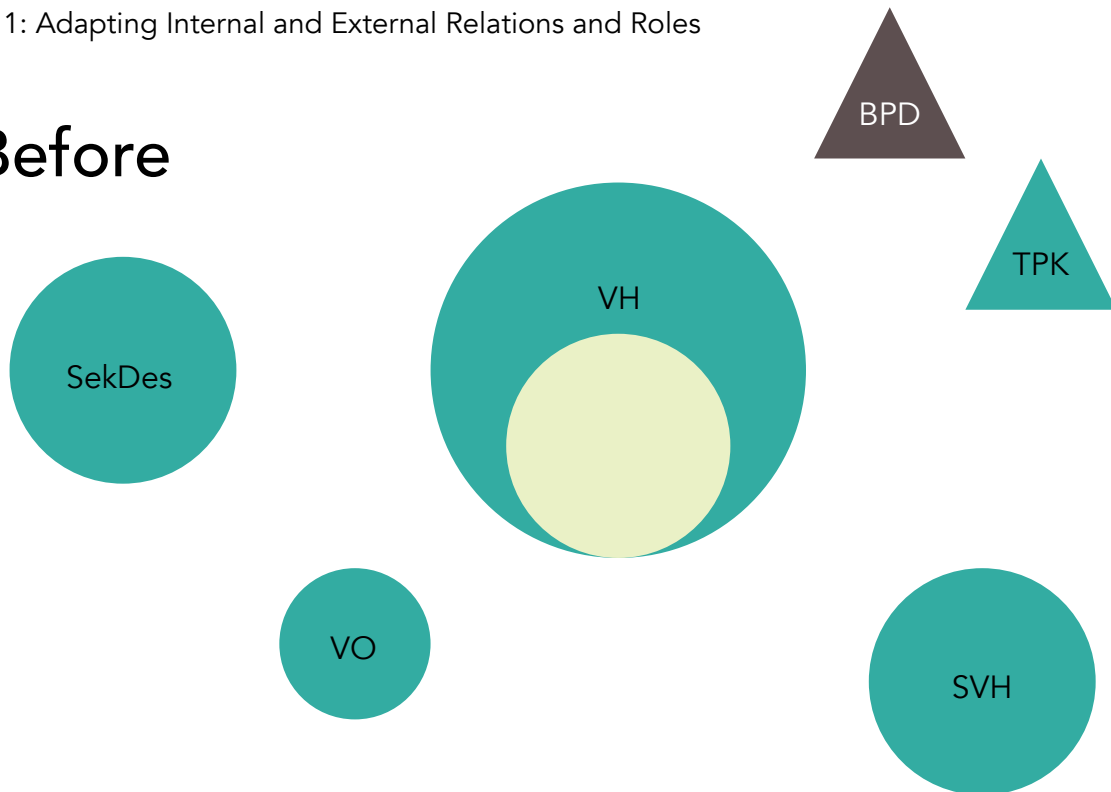
Field Notes, Sulawesi



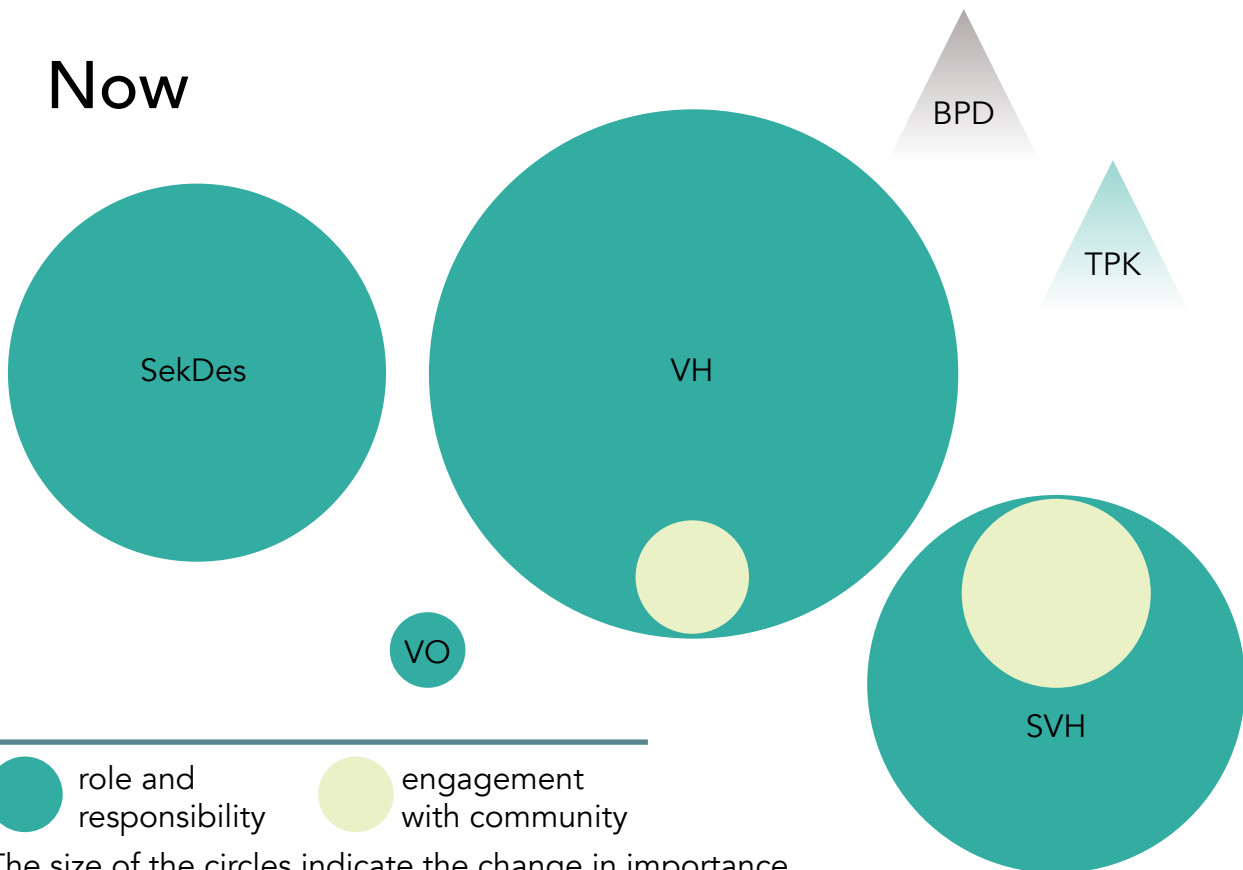
- The Villagers' priority is irrigation. At the moment they have to bring water to their fields in containers, Sulawesi

Figure 1: Adapting Internal and External Relations and Roles

Before



Now



- role and responsibility
- engagement with community

The size of the circles indicate the change in importance (VH = Village Head, SVH = Sub-Village Head, VO = Kaur)

3.4 Changing Roles and Responsibilities

The relations, roles and responsibilities of the key actors in the village apparatus have adapted with the challenges of the new Village Law. Figure 1 illustrates the changing dynamics that we found were common across the villages based on people's perceptions of the changing roles, responsibilities and engagement with the community. The topic graphic depicts the relationships before the introduction of the Village Law and the lower graphic illustrates the changes emerging after the introduction of the Village Law.

The Village Head's role has increased in importance. His/her role is uniformly acknowledged by everyone as the most (and increasingly) important with people typically saying such things as, *'everything depends on the Village Head'* and, in some cases, their role in village governance is described as, *'a one man show'* or, as one Village Head in Aceh laughed, *'I am the king here'*. With this, their connections with the district and *camat* are seen in some villages as increasingly significant. This is starkly illustrated by the revelations of one woman Village Head who explained that the only reason she agreed to take this on was as a distraction from her husband's death. A somewhat unmotivated Head, she felt her key asset now is that her new husband works in the *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah* (regional parliament). She relies fully on her husband for advice and leverage for village development issues and *'facilitating'* approval processes and signing off the disbursement of the funds (see accountability section for more details). She shared that she wanted to divorce her husband when she retired from being Village Head, but for now he is needed.

With the increasing importance and responsibility, the increased workload and strains of trying to keep up with changing regulations, the role of Village Head in relation to their constituents is changing and people said they have less time to engage directly with them, despite the demand for this, as discussed above. This key interaction has devolved to the Sub-Village Heads.

'Everything depends on the Village Head'

(Farmer, Sulawesi)

The Sub-Village Head is increasingly being relied upon as the main point of contact for sharing of information and directly inter-facing and listening to their communities. The diagram therefore shows an increasing role taking up these duties from the overstretched Village Heads. Before, their roles were largely confined to conveying information from the Village Government to their sub-villages and carrying out occasional directives. Now, echoing others, one Sub-Village Head pointed out that, *'my work is harder than the Village Head as you need to solve problems'*. The Sub-Village Head is seen by many as the first point of contact for any complaints or grievances. In one village, for example, a farmer explained that he complained to the Sub-Village Head last year when there was a shortage of fertiliser, and the Sub-Village Head became very active this year to ensure the same situation did not occur again. He even went to the shop personally to buy the fertiliser with his own money. In the village in Sulawesi where the Village Head is described as the *'one man show'*, she complained that, *'the Sub-Village Head is not functioning well because the villagers come to me with very small things directly'* hinting at the need for a change even though villagers thought otherwise.

In addition to the increased interface with the community, other responsibilities are devolved to the Sub-Village Heads such as collecting land taxes and disseminating information to their constituents, to the extent that one Sub-Village Head in NTB believed that now, *'Sub-Village Heads have a lot of power, more things to do compared with the past and more direct contact with the people. I can be reached at any time and privately in my own home'*.

'Sub-Village Heads have a lot more power and more to do than in the past'

(Sub-Village Head, NTB)

Busier Sub-Village Head

This 50 year old Sub-Village Head, with whom we lived, is key in developing proposals for the community and submitting them to the Sub-district. He was appointed as Sub Village Head as no-one else wanted the position. He showed us proposals that he made: the renovation of poor people's houses; provision of seeds and rice; a proposal for accessing cows. He is now trying to assist his community with registering births and ensuring individual ID cards (KTP). He secured funding for the renovation of 51 houses: 50 for poor families as well as his own house (as he explained it needed to be expanded so he could hold meetings with the other Sub-Village Heads). He has also proposed that an office should be built for the Sub-Village Heads but this was not approved. He has close relations with the district social office, and poor relations with the Village Head who feels he bypasses him with his own schemes and proposals.

Field Notes, Sub Village Head, NTB

The way in which Sub-Village Heads are selected or appointed varies widely. In some locations, they are directly appointed by the Village Head while in others the community vote for their candidate who is then proposed for ratification by the Village Head. In one case, the process is described as having recently changed to an open recruitment process in which candidates are required to submit an agreement letter describing their suitability for the role. They need to have a SMA degree and have lived in the area for at least one year. The Village Head is then required to submit the proposals to the *camat* for approval and the candidates must go to the sub-district to submit all documents (ID, family card, education certificates and proof of residence in the area for more than one year).

The **Village Secretary** role has enlarged. Always a key player in the village apparatus, we found them to be increasingly relied upon by the Village Heads to lead all village administration, and, in most cases are being entrusted to oversee the affairs of the village. The administrative demands, especially the increased paperwork have become *de facto* their job. In addition to accountability concerns (discussed in more detail below), the

Village Secretary is increasingly becoming the only one to sign off on proposals, budgets and receipts for funds. In one village, the Village Secretary is described by a Sub-Village Head as, *'the Vice Village Head'*. *Everyone needs to meet him first before they meet the Village Head, he is the key to the village'*. The woman Village Head mentioned above who is reliant on her husband's DPRD linkages, is also completely reliant on her Village Secretary for processing all of the village administration. As shared by a village development office staff member, *'the Village Head signs off and stamps documents without looking at them, the Village Secretary processes everything'*. This Village Secretary also maintains detailed village data and fund allocations, uploads the information directly onto the website from his office computer, and could clearly explain future plans for Village Fund disbursement. Several other Village Secretaries we met were clearly the keepers of information and were the most knowledgeable about the new Law and the funding and disbursement regulations, often more informed than Village Treasurers (see Box 11 illustrates a typical reliance on the Village Secretary). In another village the Village Secretary is fully aware of the difference between DD and ADD and the tranche payment system. He explained that *'Jokowi DD, not ADD, but DD from Jokowi. We have 700million from DD Jokowi which we received in June/July, and we are supposed to get it 40%, 40%, 20%'*. The very experienced Village Secretary of another village explained to us that they are in *'a transitional era, and this year received 280 million. In 2016 it will be 500 million, and then by 2017 it is expected to be 1 billion'*.

'(the Village Secretary) is the bridge between the Kecamatan and Village'

(Village Secretary, Java)

'(the Village Secretary) is key to the Village'

(Sub-Village Head, Java)

Some confusion was expressed about the changing regulations on the status of Village Secretaries. In one village, the Sub-Village Heads had shared that there was to be a change to the recruitment process, the Village Secretary indicated that there was a change in ruling regarding Village Secretaries too. He himself is 58 years old, has been PNS (civil servant status) for six years, has held the position for nearly 30 years, and had heard that there is a new regulation which would mandate that the Village Secretaries must be PNS status. He explained,

'Now every Village Secretary has to be PNS. It makes it possible to have Village Secretaries from outside the village because it depends on the government. One of my friends is a sub-district PNS and she is a Village Secretary in another village now. That's horrible because they don't know the situation of the village. I really hope that my son can be the next Village Secretary here because he really knows this village, but I am worried as he isn't a PNS yet.'

A very different picture emerges from two other villages, where they say the Village Secretary will become a part of the village apparatus rather than a PNS appointed from outside. People perceive this as a positive change. As the Village Head who is an Ex-PNPM Village Facilitator and well connected explained that, *'previously when the Village Secretary is PNS we had two leaders who had to be followed'* and now *'the new Law allows you to appoint one yourself'*. With the new demands of the Village Law he felt they needed someone who is *'young, with computer skills and a clear administrative role'*. Accordingly, their new Village Secretary, who has now been in office for 6

11

The importance of the Village Secretary

I stayed with the Village Secretary for three nights. He has been working as Village Secretary for 28 years. He is the imam for the mosque and, like elsewhere in East Java, being a religious leader carries more influence than being an administrative leader. Villagers came regularly to his house to consult him on everything.

Earlier when I had gone to the Village Office I met officials from the Ministry of Agriculture who were waiting for the Village Secretary to provide some data on land ownership. He was the only one who could supply the maps they needed. Later another official came, wanting the Village Secretary to assist with allocating Health cards. He was the only one who could do this too. When I went with him to his farm he stopped by the ongoing irrigation scheme construction programme to ask about progress and check on the contractor. He always seemed to be 'on the job' but he was diffident about his work. I gleaned more about how hard he worked from his wife and children.

Field Notes, Java



Working on Sunday on the first and second Village Fund accounts

months, is a 22 year old computer science graduate student currently completing his degree. He only receives IDR 1 million per month, half the allocatable salary, as *'he is still completing his studies'*.

Village Office Staff (section heads) role, by contrast with those of the Village Head, Sub-Village Heads and Village Secretary seems to have diminished, even though it was not onerous before. Some of those we met seemed confused about exactly which sector they led and what their role was supposed to be. The Village Office staff shared that they have a lot of spare time and do not regularly have to go to the village office. As typical of others, a village agricultural officer in one location told us he only goes to the village office twice per week as they have a rota system with the other village officers. The office is normally only open for two hours a day from 10 a.m. until midday and they expect four to five officers to be present each day (see Box 12). But during the time our researcher was living in the village, he only saw two village officers in the village office on any given day. These staff commonly pursue their main livelihoods as tailors, farmers, construction workers, and *bengkel* (small mechanic garage) owners.

Village Office staff typically said they had some, but limited, understanding of the Village Law and the new regulations and were waiting for further details. To date they have not received any direct training or orientation so their information comes from their core village officials (Village Secretary, Village Head or Treasurer, who have attended some training sessions) or from the media and informal channels. Their overriding initial reactions to the changes are concern and worry as the accountability

requirements are more rigorous and reporting mechanisms more complex. As a result, a number of the staff shared that they are now reluctant to sign off documents and instead defer to the Village Secretary and/or the Village Head.

The BPD's role, function and presence are the most contested and are a source of confusion across all the villages. The diagram shows them to be external to the core governance team both before and after the introduction of the Village Law. However, since the introduction of the Village Law, their role seems even more unclear. The body has experienced different iterations and even a change of name while retaining the use of the same acronym¹ over the last two decades so it is not surprising that people have different perceptions of its function. Different officials appear to have adopted different interpretations, either by default or in some cases, purposely to disempower the BPD and reinforce their own positions.

The lack of light green shading in the diagram also illustrates that people do not perceive the BPD is fulfilling the representative role of the community. Instead the community engagement has shifted to the Sub-Village Head who is seen as the main interface with their constituents for grievances, socialisation and information. All study villages have BPD in some form or another but the perception of whether it is a permanent or temporary body is evenly divided between the locations. Its presence is predominantly only recognised within official

¹ BPD Badan Badan Permusyawaratan Desa (Village Consultative Committee), formerly Badan Perwakilan Desa (Village Representative Committee)

12

Village Office staff perspective

'I only go to the village office twice in a week. On Mondays, all the staff have a weekly update meeting. I go again for my rota on Wednesdays, staying there while the Village Office is open from 10am to noon. After that I go back home for lunch and prayer. Then, I go to the farm from 2 to 5 pm, right now to plant chilli and paddy - or only to check and chase away birds. When I do not go to the Village Office, I spend my days in my fields'. In the evenings, he attends Qur'an recital meetings either in people's homes or the mosque. 'People sometimes come to my house for help with paperwork'. As a village officer, he earns IDR 1.2 million per month and more for administering the farmers loan programme. 'All the Village Officers have lots of spare time and all have other jobs such as tailoring, running a motorbike repair workshop, running a small shop, construction or farming, like me. But we all live in the village -you cannot be a migrant worker and serve people'.

Field Notes, Village Officer, Java

village governance circles but not by villagers who are often unaware of its existence. In one of our families the parents, who are farmers, were not aware of the BPD even though their 25 year old son, who lives with them, is a member of the BPD.

The manner in which the BPD is appointed or elected and the composition of the members varies across locations. In some villages, the BPD members are appointed directly by the Village Head. A Village Secretary describes a typical opinion of the BPD as, *'the right hand people of the Village Head in reality'* even though he knew that they were meant to have an accountability oversight role. In a village in Aceh, the BPD is eight male elders referred to as *'tuha'*. Their appointment by the Village Head is based only on the elders being part of *'their dynasty'*. They rarely meet as a group and the Village Head only invites four of them to any village meetings. The others are only called upon for signing documents. In contrast, in a village in Sulawesi the BPD is recognised as representing each sub-village. Each elects two BPD members through a village deliberation (*musawayah desa*) process. These village deliberations are not entirely open as the Sub-Village Head determines who *'should attend'*. The BPD has 11 BPD members, including five women, because the village adopts the *'PNPM promoted gender participation'* principles during the selection process.

In all study villages the BPD members shared that they felt they had limited-to-no power, even if they wanted to fulfil their role in oversight and accountability. In the village described above, where the BPD members are representatives from each sub-village, they complained *'we are always stuck in the middle between the Village Head and the people. Our position is very difficult. Villagers cannot go to Village Head, they come to us to tell us their demands and complaints. We have to go to Village Head with these aspirations. When these are not realized they are angry at the BPD –so we are always stuck in the middle.'* Another village also had 11 BPD members, all men also chosen as representatives from each sub-villages. In November 2015 they tried to investigate a suspicious road construction project (see Box 13).

13

So what is the role of the BPD?

Although backing the current Village Head in his election in 2013, Pak BPD shared that he had never been convinced that he was the right sort to be a Village Head. *'He was only a social activist before and not really involved in village development. He might seem intelligent but a Village Head does not necessarily need to be intelligent. He needs to be a strong leader'*.

At the start of his tenure, Pak BPD admitted that the Village Head was better than expected. *'He always involved members of the BPD in village meetings. He even allocated some funds to support one programme that people in the village widely regard as the 'BPD programme', 'Tahlilan Prayer', a prayer event to remember the dead'. But, over time, he started to feel uneasy about the transparency of decisions. 'He will invite everyone to meetings to discuss development projects, but never really opened up about budgets'. Pak BPD also noticed that he paid more attention to the sub-villages where he had many supporters, leaving others behind. 'For example roads were only constructed in two sub-villages'. He also seemed to be 'typical of a weak leader, easily influenced by his friends and relatives'. Pak BPD said he spoke to the Village Head about these concerns but was not taken seriously. 'After that, I gave up on him'.*

But one time he did raise concerns again. A road was constructed without consulting the village. This road connected the Village Head's own sub-village to the main road and passed his own house. The source of the funds for this were unclear. *'I found out that there had been three sources of fund; two from the District Agriculture Office which were earmarked for irrigation and for seed transportation. The third was from the District Government for 'aspiration'. As far as I knew this was against regulations as a maximum of two funds can only be used for one project'. He sent a letter to the Village Head pointing this out. The Village Head responded verbally that there had been consultation with Sub-Village Heads and told him that it was not his place to 'interfere' and ask about the decisions of the village government. He said, 'You are not the auditor of the project' and he told me I could only raise questions in the village consultation meetings at the end of the year but 'I only made an enquiry... that's how the BPD should work... monitoring the implementation of village development programmes'. Pak BPD shared that the relations since have become very tense and that he 'does not trust the Village Head any more'.*

Field Notes, BPD Member, NTB

Table 8: Profile of BPDs

Location	Exists? y/n	Name known by	Number of members	Last meeting	Purpose of last meeting	No times/year meet	Active/passive (community assessment)
A3	Yes	'Tuha'/ elders	4 men core and additional 4 men for signatures only	October '15	Community requested a meeting because had heard Village Head had 'received millions in money'.	Only when needed to sign	Passive
NT3	Yes	Villagers have no idea about this body. The members are all elites and they call it BPD.	11 (one for each dusan) – all men	Sept '15	BPD was suspicious about project spending, complaint about Village Head's suspected fraud.	Should be 4 times but only twice in 2015	Passive
CJ2	Yes	BPD	11 listed in office (6 men, 5 women)	August '15	There was change in budget – called by Village Secretary by letter.	3 times/year	Passive
SS2	Yes	BPD	6 (5 men +1 woman)	Nov '15	Socialisation about Village Funds - invited by letter to come to Village Office	At least x1 month with village apparatus co-ordinators	Active
SS1	Yes	BPD	11 listed in the office – 6 men, 5 women	Dec, '15	Election		
NT1	Yes	BPD interpreted as (Badan Pengawas Desa)	9 men	October '15	When Village Funds came – only for sharing information from the Village Head (First meeting in Jan 2015 – village regulation meeting. Another meeting Jan 16 planned – Village Law meeting)	2 times/year	Active
A1	Yes	Called Tuha peud ' comprising four elders	7 (6 men + 1 woman) three more included for signing purposes only	August '15	Had IDR 350 million to build road	Quarterly	Passive
EJ1	Yes	Officials know it as BPD. 2 village staff knew change of the name.	11 members- all men.	Nov '15	Combined religious event and gathered everyone together to discuss the village – but Village Head does not meet them.	Twice a month	Active

“The BPD does not understand their role – they want to make themselves an internal auditor, but shouldn’t do it to me, they should be an equal partner to me, provide suggestions not criticisms. They don’t know the new rules.”

(Village Head, Java)

14

‘All my BPD colleagues are passive’

I met the treasurer of the BPD. She is an optimistic person with a clear intention to serve well as a BPD member and oversee village development. She was a kindergarten teacher for many years before becoming the treasurer of the BPD. For her, becoming a treasurer of BPD gave her the opportunity to learn about the Village Law. But she faces many challenges. The main one is the reluctance of her BPD colleagues to discuss transparency, *‘I wonder how they can be a member of BPD if they are not willing to speak the truth? They are all passive. Can you imagine that I am the only one to oversee everything? It is supposed to be our job, not only me!’* During the BPD selection, she wanted to be the head but she was not appointed. *‘I think some people are afraid that as the leader I will have the courage to speak the truth’.*

Field Notes, BPD Treasurer, Java

In the study village with the woman Village Head with good DPRD connections, there is a very driven and dedicated BPD member eager to fulfil her oversight role, however she is being side-lined by other members of the BPD and other officials (see Box 14). The BPD only met twice in 2015 to sign off on plans, and for these meetings the Village Head selected who was invited. The Village Secretary is the one mentioned previously as having a good understanding of the Village Law processes and who keeps good, up-to-date data. Like the Village Head, refuses to share this data and the information on funding with the BPD.

In the village where the Village Head is described as ‘becoming like the President’, one of the women BPD members complained that she is not invited to meetings. When she confronted the office staff about this they just responded that *‘they forgot’*. She complained to the BPD head about this but he suggested that she should *‘just let it go’*. She believes she is not invited as she is quite vocal and makes her opinions known.

The Tim Pengelola Kegiatan / Desa (TPK/TPKD) body is present in nearly half of the study villages and is sometimes referred to as the TPK and other times as TPKD. Although the roles vary quite considerably, it is often described as being fairly influential. It was always seen as more important and influential than the BPD. In villages where the TPK/D is not present the role of overseeing the project funds and administration is undertaken by the Village Secretary.

In some villages the TPK is regarded as being a temporary body that is appointed to supervise projects (see box stories 15 and 16). In one location it is seen as a permanent body which decides on village projects, manages the village accounts, is a signatory on accounts and makes progress reports to the Badan Penanaman Modal Daerah (BPMD) in the district. In effect, in this case, the title ‘TPK’ has been given to an expanded village office rather than creating a separate projects committee. Its members are the Treasurer, Village Secretary, village sector heads, a BPD member and the Village Head’s wife. The Village Head usually appoints the members of the committee. In one location, the TPK are also described as the body that determines how remaining funds should be *‘distributed’* at the end of the project. The Village Head here complained that

15

What is the TPKD? Confusion.

My 'father' is an ex Village Secretary and his *berugak* (sheltered outside sitting area) is always full of people, day and night. One evening, two men came to my 'father's' *berugak* and chatted in *Sasak*. My 'mother' served coffee and introduced me to them. One was my father's nephew and is now the TPKD secretary in the village. My father said that both of them had been PNPM facilitators before, but when PNPM closed they became TPKD in the village. I was interested to know more about the TPKD and how it is run. They said that, *'now with the new system, every project should have a TPKD (Tim Pelaksana Kegiatan Desa or village project implementation team)'* and that it should be comprised by a head, secretary and treasurer.

The next morning I met the Village Head and chatted further about the TPKD. He said *'not all projects have different TPKD, there are several projects that share the one TPKD... The TPKD will get IDR 700,000 on completion of a project. But they can also work for the project: buying the materials, paying the workers, mostly like a contractor'*. He gave the example of the village office construction where the building and the fence are two separate projects but have one TPKD. He said that Sub-Village Heads can also act as TPKD when there is construction for their sub-villages funded out of Village Funds.

In another village in the same district, I was chatting with the Village Secretary at his house about the role of the BPD. As we talked about their role in reviewing the village budget, he said, *'actually there is a new arrangement in the village called TPK'* which he interpreted as *Tim Pengelola Keuangan* or financial management team. He explained that this consists of the Village Treasurer and other staff from the village office and that all village funds should come through this entity before being allocated to activities and projects.

Field Note, Ex Village Secretary, Village Head, Village Secretary in another village

the BPD kept *'interfering'* and needed to wait until the end of a project to assess the total costs so that the TPK could then decide how the remaining funds are distributed.

16

Another Interpretation of TPKD

A Sub-Village Head and BPD member explained to me that the new Village Law requires the appointment of a TPKD for each project to manage the money. This appointment is only made once the project has been approved and is about to commence. They explained the team should be comprised of three to five members of whom two or three are village officials and the others should be representatives of the community. They alone have authority to release money for payments. But, they say, the Village Head selects them and ensures they support him.

Field Notes, Sub Village Head and BPD Member, NTB

3.5 Knowledge and Understanding of Village Law

Many village officials indicated that they are aware of the introduction of the Village Law, and understand that the Law will entail increased responsibilities, increased funds and increased requirements for accountable practices. However, in these early stages in the implementation of the Law, people said they lacked understanding of the details, procedures and regulations and they said that they are *'waiting for further direction'*. As shared by the youngest Village Head, *'we will wait until after the government regulation has been released and then we will get more involved. It is the villagers who will manage the money now. We must be able to set up programmes and will not be able to ask for guidance from the district or sub-district again and again.'* Whilst the intention to devolve power to the village for its own decision-making is clearly understood by this Village Head, not aware of the regulations that have already been released.

As highlighted in the previous section, it is often the Village Secretary and the more engaged,

connected Village Heads who have the most detailed understanding of the Village Law. But even these have a narrow view of immediate requirements rather than an understanding of the long term perspective and intentions of the devolution of powers to the village.

Outside official circles and the immediate village office, the understanding of the Village Law is much more limited. Some, especially younger and more educated people, recall messages from TV and/or newspapers such as the 2014 Election slogan *'satu desa, satu milyar'* ('One village, one billion') but few knew what this was for. Many others in the community did not have any knowledge or understanding of the new Law and its implications and are quite content for it to remain that way, as typified by the comment, *'We don't want to think complicated because we already have a hard life'* (see participation chapter).

One of the biggest problems for the Village Officers is the new funding arrangements. Many officials say they are confused with and struggling to understand the difference between the funding sources, whether the funds could be pooled, and what funds could or could not be used for. These confusions are illustrated by the following interpretations:

- In one of the villages in Java the Village Head believes the IDR 285 million Village Funds (the *Dana Desa, DD*) that they received should not be for road or projects, but is solely for village office operating costs and salaries.
- In several villages, it is believed that the DD funds should, *'only be used for physical construction projects'* (Village Head). One treasurer in Sulawesi elaborated that he has just attended a training (November 2015, some five months after Village Funds were disbursed) at the district capital with representatives from 84 other villages also attending. He said that they were told that only physical construction should be funded.
- The Village Head and BPD members in another village believe that DD funds should only be used for physical infrastructure and that the new Law stipulates village office operating costs and salaries should not come from these funds, but should only be paid through the ADD.

'We don't want to think complicated because we already have a hard life'

(Farmer)

- The former Village Secretary in this same village is the only person who shared with us that he thought the new regulations meant that all funding sources are pooled together (see Box 17).
- Another Sub-Village Head said that *'roads cannot be funded by the DD as they are already funded by the Public Works Department. The Central Government is responsible for roads. We can only use DD for small internal village roads'*.

The provision of information some time after disbursement of monies has worried people that they have not followed the rules. For example, the Treasurer in Sulawesi who attended the November training was concerned, *'I'm sure my financial report will not match'* as the village has already used funds to support allowances for training and travel and not spent it all on construction.

Many others are concerned about mixing pools of money (as highlighted Box 17), especially mixing village funds with central and district government funds and projects. The Village Head who is the ex-PNPM Village Facilitator echoed the confusion and concern of others: *'the way I have been managing the financial matters was breaking the law..... I should not mix ADD and DD'*.

3.6 Training and Mentoring

A selection of officials from most of the study villages had attended training on the Village Law organised either at sub-district and/or district level and some had been to Jakarta for training. The invitation for training was generally for the Village Head, Treasurer and the Village Secretary. Those attending training told us that they were happy that the three members of the Village Government had been invited together to attend the training as this provided them with an opportunity to learn together and support each other after training.

While people appreciated that training was offered to them, they also shared that it was provided too late (or, in one case, too early; see Box 18) in the Village Fund cycle, was very technical and that they did not fully understand it all.

Many complained about the timing of the training. Typifying the views we heard across locations, a Treasurer in Sulawesi who had attended a large scale formal training in November, 2015 along with officials from 84 other villages queried, *'Why were funds distributed in July and we were only given training in November?'* and another, *'the training was good but should have been given in July when the first amount of money was provided for DD Jokowi'*.

In Aceh, the research team stayed in a hotel prior to their stay in the community which happened to be hosting a training course on Village Law. Chatting with trainees of the course, they also were frustrated that the training was *'so late in December'* but shared that they were relieved that the trainers had assured them that *'whatever progress we make this year will be accepted because it is the first year- the trainers said there were still many problems from Jakarta'*.

Some shared that the training had been satisfactory in terms of providing them with the basics to fill in and comply with the new reporting procedures, with a Treasurer, for example telling us, *'I now know how to make a good (financial) report compared to before. It is a lot more complicated now but I have new knowledge'*. Others who received training only in December told us *'the training is key for managing things in 2016'*.

17

Pooling funds

We only met one person who indicated that the Village Funds should all be pooled. He is a former Village Secretary. He told us *'there are four different funding sources, the ADD, DD, incentives from tax collection and the Kabupaten Dana Hibah (Grant Fund from the District). These are put together as one budget and operating costs will come from this but only up to a certain percentage of the total'*. Interested to know why he is no longer the Village Secretary, we found he has left the post to pursue his law degree and his understanding of Village Law has come from this not from any trainings given when he was Village Secretary.

Field Notes, Former Village Secretary, NTB

'We understand that this is the first year where everybody is learning'

(Woman Treasurer, Sulawesi)

18

'Please do not change it again next year'

A woman Treasurer shared her frustration that regulations and processes keep changing. They were some of the first to attend training on the Village Law on Village Fund Reporting, but *'the reporting mechanism has changed since then so the training we got is useless. The reporting itself is very confusing but we understand that this is the first year where everybody is learning. But please do not change it again next year. Up to now, we are still completing the supporting documents for the first tranche financial report. It was finished months ago but they still ask us to add more supporting documents based on the new training which happened after ours'*

Field Notes, Woman Treasurer, Sulawesi

However, when we probed more about the details of the training and what they had learned, officials often shared with us that they lacked detailed understanding of the Village Law and its application. Some showed the handouts and manuals they had been given in training and one said, resonating with the sentiments others shared with us, *'it is all in there... but I didn't get it all'*. The traditional healer Village Head in Aceh who attended a five day training in the sub-district in November on the technical details of budgeting and financial reporting said that he and his fellow Village Heads had felt *'a common "puzzleness"'* because of the highly technical language and jargon used in the training and felt unable to ask for clarification. But he too shared that he was reassured because he was provided with hard copies of the manuals and the reporting forms and believed that, *'the only important thing is the forms that we have to fill in..... all the other aspects are not important'*.

'I now know how to make a good (financial) report compared to before. It is a lot more complicated now but I have new knowledge'

(Treasurer about the formal training, NTB)

Their understanding was also limited by the fact that many shared that they did not attend the full schedule of training, leaving early in the afternoon in order to get home before dark or in some cases skipping the last days. The Village Head highlighted in Box 19, for example left the five day training

Example of reaction to trainings received

The Village Officials (Village Head, Village Secretary and Treasurer) were invited to three trainings in 2015.

The first was in April and lasted four days. This, they said, was 'fairly general about poverty and village descriptions'.

The second was in July and lasted three days in the same hotel as the first training. This was described as being about 'village development planning and facilitator management'.

The third was in November and was held in the sub-district. It was five days and 'covered the technical details of budgeting and financial reporting.'

They commented on the daily transport allowances for the first two trainings but not for the third which was supposed to be residential. The Village Head actually left the third one early.

Field Notes, Aceh

'We all felt a common "puzzleness"'

(Village Head in Aceh talking in English about the last training received, echoing others)

early *'because I missed my children'*. Those we met in the hotel in Aceh who were attending the training told us they finished early every day as everyone wanted to go back home, even though they had been provided with a hotel room to stay in. In some cases the trainers took the decision to shorten the training by a day or more.

Some shared that they had paid for the training, around IDR 11 million, out of the Village budget. This is a departure from other training they received in the past which was often provided for free and with

generous allowances. Officials were happy to share how they enjoy training opportunities in big cities as they see this as an opportunity to go shopping and explore. As one Village Secretary in NTB shared when he went for technical support service training in Jakarta, *'I went for a one-day training and six days holiday'* and others talked about the importance of bringing back oleh-oleh (souvenirs) on their return. The attraction of allowances was shared widely and transport money provided to attend the Village Law trainings was considered generous.

Nevertheless, discussions around valuing this kind of formal training led to several people sharing that training in hotels is not what is needed (despite the incentives). A woman Treasurer who was not alone in her opinion, was adamant that training should not take place in hotels but rather should be provided on site through mentoring. She said,

'We don't need training in hotels as we will quickly forget. We go there for food and to stay in an air conditioned room. But really what we want is administration mentors in the village office, friendly support who can give us direction if we don't understand. It takes time having to go back and forth to the District trying to get the reporting right. The District Officer is rude about what is required. We personally think they do not understand either but are just being rude so it seems that they understand'

Contact details (mobile phone numbers and email addresses) were exchanged between trainers and trainees in the Village Law training with the promise to provide follow-up advice if needed. But people shared that when they tried to contact trainers they got no response, including having their phone calls unanswered. For example, a Treasurer in Sulawesi explained that he had understood the *Sistem Informasi Keuangan* (Finance Information System) during the training and thought it was *'a very useful online system'*, but following the training the system went offline. He was not sure what to do so tried contacting the trainer but *'his HP (mobile phone) wasn't working'* and he felt let down. None of the Village Offices in the study locations actually have internet connections so emailing is not a way to keep in contact. Occasionally Village Secretaries shared that they have a modem for personal use

'I got IDR 200,000 and it cost only IDR 30,000 for petrol for my bike'

(Village Officer on attending training)

which they also use for work purposes but they do not make these available for the wider office.

As the formal system of post-training support was not functioning, Village Officials told us that they relied on their informal networks with other Village Officials. These networks are quite active and our research team witnessed a number of interactions on the phone and especially the sharing of completed forms and paperwork (through shared pen drives) so that others could copy them. A Village Head explained that in his sub-district,

'All Village Heads have been co-ordinating with each other so that one file can be copied and pasted into our documents. Each copies the budget allocation forms from other villages, the absentee list and other administrative forms. Every administrative form shared in the training is being shared and copied in this way when they are completed'

The Village Head mentioned above who worries that he may have broken the law about mixing ADD and DD funds shared, *'since the training I realised it is not easy to manage the village - I am now*

'What we want is administration mentors in the village office'

(Woman Treasurer, Sulawesi)

having to learn all over again'. He told us that he relies heavily on his peers as well as others, 'so I am actively getting in touch with old contacts in the Governor's office to help me'.

Many Village officials told us that they knew there would be support from Village Law facilitators. The three trainees that we met during their training at a hotel shared that, *'during PNPM we had assistance from PNPM facilitators. We have heard there will be help for this too but they still have not decided who will help us'*. In one village a Sub-Village Head had heard that the Village Law facilitator is being selected but he didn't know what the role is.

It is understood that these appointments have not been made or that it is early days but in two study villages the facilitators have already been appointed. However, officials complained that they are not very active. In one of these villages the Treasurer explained that the new facilitator, who was a graduate from the district capital University, came to the village in November 2015 and was introduced as, *'the facilitator for DD Jokowi'*. The facilitator himself met at another time explained that he has to service three villages and is concerned that his monthly salary of only IDR 2 million, *'won't even be enough to cover transport as the villages are far apart'*. He told us he hadn't seen the scope of work for the job before he accepted it and now he *'felt sorry for taking the job'*. He has told the Treasurer that *'he will come whenever people need him... but with this low salary this will not be more than once per month.'* In the other village, the Village Head said she has met the new facilitator who is supporting two villages, but according to her, *'he only came for a signature on his timesheet claiming he had worked with us for two months. He said he was very busy with the other village'*. But she said this cannot be true as the other village is nearby. *'It is written in his timesheet that he has done BUMDes socialization to our village but he never did this'*.

3.7 Adapting to New Procedures and Processes

Village Officials unanimously liked the fact that the Village Funds are transferred to the village account and managed by the village apparatus directly despite the concerns mentioned above about the increased responsibility and risk. As shared by the woman Village Head who is likened to the President now *'we don't have to beg to the kabupaten as the funds are directly transferred to us'*. The Village Funds received by each of the study villages are summarized in Table 9 overleaf. All but two villages shared they had received at least two tranches and were expecting the final tranche very soon, so it could be expended before the end of the year.

The procedures for villages to receive the Village Law funds from the sub-district are varied and generally perceived as, *'more complex than previously'* (Village Secretary, Java). Different villages experienced varying degrees of engagement with different stakeholders at the district and/or sub-district level. To release funds, different processes are required for approval, different timelines and different amounts of effort are needed. In one of the villages in Aceh the Head of the BPD told us that, *'of the twenty seven villages in the district only seven had a smooth process for payments of tranches'*.

20

A two month process to get Village Funds

The Village Head described the process: *'first we go to the sub-district and get written approval from the Camat for the disbursement of funds based on criteria I do not know. Then I need to go to Village Development Council at the district, where three people need to sign off the disbursement form – the Council Head, Secretary and Treasurer. The speed of the signing depends on the extent of lobbying, whether all the documentation is complete and 'whether the bribe is OK'. Then we need to go to the BPKAD (State Asset Office) in the district, which needs three more signatures. After this we go to the bank (BRI) and they will transfer the funds to the village account. Overall the process takes around two months if the bribes are good'*

Field Notes, Village Head, Aceh

In one of the villages in Sulawesi, the whole process required seven different signatures. The Village Officials said the criteria for approving the disbursement of the funds was not at all clear and the process took around two months and was only successfully achieved, *'when the bribe money is OK'* (Village Head) (see Box 21).

In another village (see Figure 2) they received the first tranche in June 2015 without any Village Plan. However, to receive the second tranche the woman Village Head with DPRD connections said that the financial report had to be approved by the *camat*. When the report was submitted she explained that she *'received persistent requests for 'facilitation fees' from the camat'*. He justified this on the basis that these were *'mentoring and technical incentives'*. In particular he told her that, *'your BPD gets more than me for doing nothing – I should get more than them'*. The Village Head described this situation *'like giving us the head and the body but the tail is still with the camat'*. She explained to us that she appreciates that the new regulations mean that *'we don't have to beg to the district as the funds are directly transferred to us'* but she is concerned that, *'the camat still has to approve the authorization of the tranches'*.

21

How do I fund the bribes needed?

'We are glad that the Village Fund is now transferred directly to the village bank account. Previously, all central government funding was channeled through the province or district. But this new arrangement makes some people unhappy and makes our life difficult. Our sub-district head has been allocated IDR 700,000 out of our village fund for mentoring and supporting us in the village to manage the village fund. But when I and other Village Heads came to ask for his signature on our first financial progress report, he was very upset and refused the envelope containing the money, *'am I a child so you gave me this amount for my pocket money?'* and he refused to sign our reports and sent us all home. The other Village Heads asked the sub-district secretary what he thought the Head was expecting from each village and were told IDR 2 million per village. The other Village Heads agreed to this. I was the only one who refused. I could not think what activities for the village I must sacrifice to pay for this additional cost. Finally, I used my own travel allowances of IDR 1 million. So I put IDR 1,700,000 in an envelope ready in my bag. The other Village Heads got his signature sooner as they were able to give him IDR 2 million, but he kept refusing me. I kept the envelope in my bag. But at Ramadhan, he called me saying he would now sign my report. He said *'I need to make a good deed in Ramadhan'*. He signed my report and I handed over the shabby envelope of money which I had kept for two months in my bag.

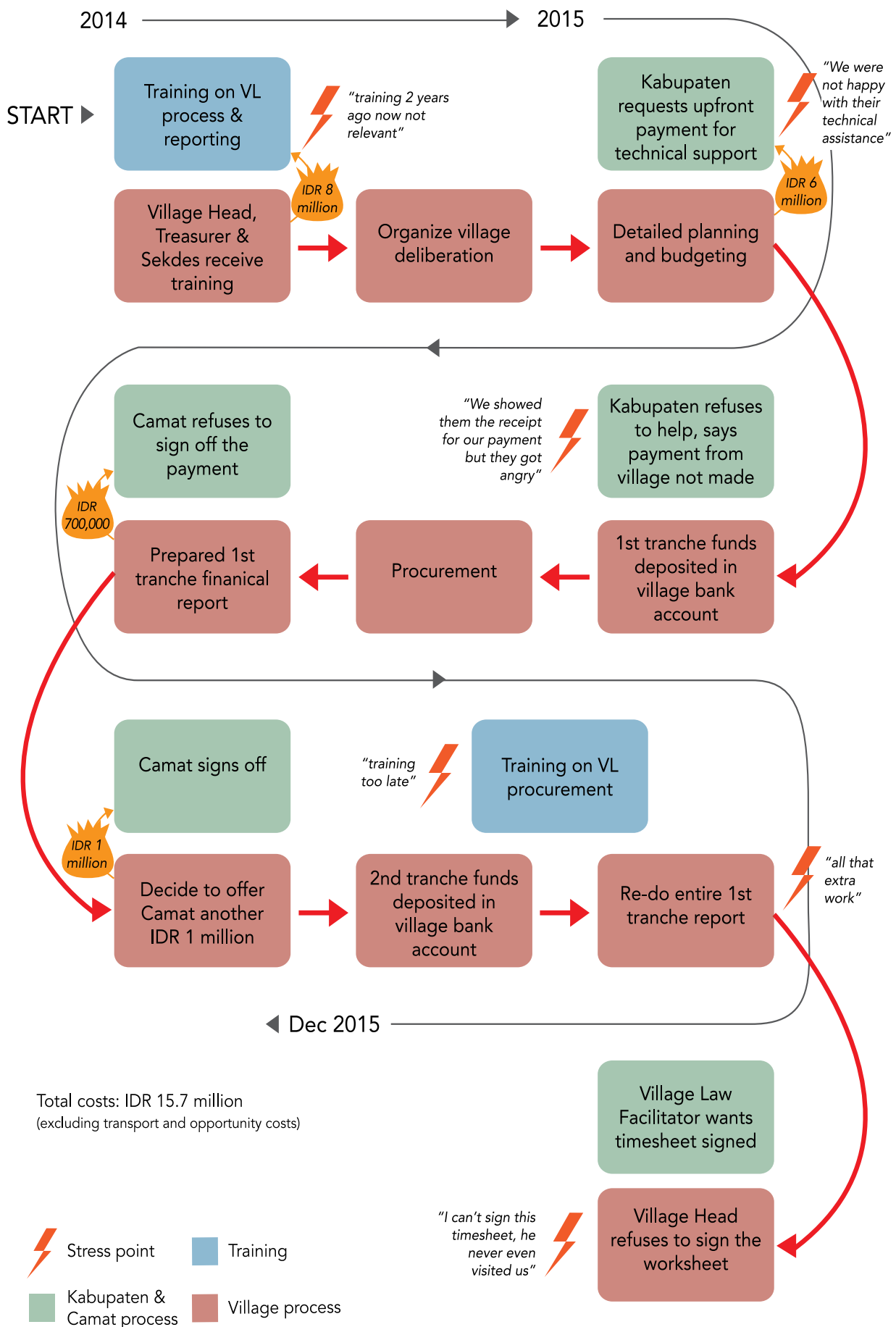
Field Notes, Village Head, Sulawesi

Table 9: Village Funds Received

Village	Total Amount received	Tranche 1 (when and how much)	Tranche 2 (when and how much)	Tranche 3 (when and how much)
A3	740 million	90 million	300 million	350 million
NT3	500 million	October 2015	December 2015	(December 2015)
CJ2	280 million*	84 million (30% of total, in August 2015)	84 million (30% of total, in November)	40% (not yet received, supposedly by the end of December, 2015)
SS2	± 230 million	170 million (June, 2015)	ADD 67 million (October, 2015)	(supposedly due in December, 2015)
EJ1	400 million *	160 million	160 million	32 million (not yet received, supposedly due in December, 2015)
SS1	700 million	280 million (40%)	280 million (40%)	140 million (20%)
A1	214 million	138 million (July/ August, 2015)	No information	No information
NT1	300 million	No information	No information	No information

* expected to be completely disbursed by the end of 2015

Figure 2: Example timeline of the process to get Village Funds



'(the new regulations are) like giving us the head and the body but the tail is still with the *camat*'

(Village Head, Sulawesi)

In another village, the Village Head described their lengthy process. First, he and his Village Development Officer had to go the BPKAD in the district to sign off the village plan, then they had to go to BAPPEDA for approval. If there is planned construction work, a trip to the district public works office is also required. Completing the process requires commuting to and from for four days. Once approved, the funds are transferred directly to the village account, which only the Treasurer could access.

It is largely understood that joint signatures are required on the village account, however in two locations BRI has provided ATM cards to particular village officials. The Treasurer in one of these villages, who is the husband of the PNPM Treasurer, explained that he is concerned that the regulations are being broken, as even though it *'explicitly says there has to be two signatures, the (caretaker) Village Head has withdrawn money from the BRI ATM by himself and so I do not know what the money is spent on'*. However, he added that *'this is not the mistake of the Village Head because BRI offered him the ATM card for the village account for ease of withdrawal. Why did BRI break the rules considering it is a village account'*? He shared that when he last checked the bank account he expected that the remaining balance should be, *'IDR 15million but it was only IDR 10,000.'* He is now worried that *'I will be the first to go to jail (because of this)... but I will take all the village apparatus with me'*. A Sub-Village Head in this same village thought that there was no village account. He believed that the Village Head has his own account and that *'the 1.4 billion*

all will go to the Village Head's account because we don't have a village bank account'.

In the other village, the Village Head noted that the BRI village bank account could be accessed via the ATM, but he did not elaborate if this was actually happening in practice.

3.8 Current Village Priorities for Village Funds

Within the current climate of uncertainty and confusion on the funding sources and processes to obtain the funds, all the Village Officials indicated that physical infrastructure is the highest priority for the Village Funds. This is perceived by Village Officials as the least controversial and easiest way to use the money. Infrastructure can always be justified as a public good and is a verifiable and visible use of funds. In the village with the experienced Village Secretary he explained that they have a *'rota system'* for road construction so that each sub-village will have its own feeder road. This is seen as a fair use of the funds and, as shared by one Sub-Village Head, *'we will just wait for the rota and our turn'* and everyone understands this. From the current year Village Fund of IDR 285 million, two roads and one water channel is being constructed, and the Village Secretary told us that, *'we have lots of plans for roads which will continue until 2017, starting with the most damaged ones'*. As explained by the Village Head, *'if you focus on making sure all the roads are built that will make people happy. People don't think beyond that. The Bupati got elected because he built the district road'*. While in another village the people explained that the Village Head is *'adored'* because the previous Village Head never finished the roads, *'which are always broken, and now he is finishing them'*. Also, the traditional healer Village Head in Aceh explained to us that roads are key for the development of the village as *'everything must start with roads to improve the access. Roads connect the three sectors: economy, education and health'*. This was reiterated by a BPD member saying, *'if the road is not fixed, this village will not get any development at all'*.

In six out of eight villages the first year of Village Law funds are being spent on village roads (see Table 10). As well as being seen as a popular shared



● Road construction

'If you focus on making sure all the roads are built, that will make people happy'

(Village Head, NTB)

public good for the community, the BPD official mentioned above who stated that of the 27 villages in the district only 7 had had a smooth process for payments of tranches, elaborating that as a result, *'we chose road construction as the money is easier to disburse'*. This preference was apparent especially when the funds are received near the end of the financial year and there is a need for quick disbursement. This rush to complete projects also is impacting the way construction work is carried out in some villages. Some shared that although they have been told to privilege local labour, the season is not appropriate for this. In the village with the road construction rota the first and second tranches of the Village Funds were received in August and November 2015, respectively. Construction work for the road could not start until November 2015. There are several nearby factories and employment opportunities which makes local construction

workers hard to mobilise, especially at such short notice and in this season. The construction work had to be finished by December and the financial report made to the *camat*, so the very experienced Village Secretary felt the only solution was to bring in outside contractors to work on the road. Concerns about finishing the work in time led the Village Head to by-pass procurement procedures and he appointed a friend as contractor for the work.

Table 10 illustrates the focus on internal village roads investment as well as small drainage channels. These, like roads, are uncontroversial and relatively easy to construct unlike drinking water and irrigation facilities which, while a priority, have not been funded. Two villages have been quick to fund Village Offices, as the youngest Village Head explained there is *'a sense of pride'* in having a new Village Office. The Village Secretary in the

Table 10: Infrastructure funded by the first year of Village Funds

Village	Village roads	Village office	Drinking water	Irrigation	Fencing	Bridge	Small Drainage Channels	BUMDes
A3	Not wanted and funded					Not wanted and funded	Wanted and funded	Wanted and not funded
NT3	Not wanted and funded	Not wanted and funded						
CJ2	Not wanted and funded		Wanted and not funded	Wanted and not funded				
SS2			Wanted and not funded				Not wanted and funded	Wanted and not funded
EJ1	Wanted and funded							Wanted and not funded
SS1				Wanted and not funded	Not wanted and funded			
A1	Wanted and funded							Wanted and not funded
NT1	Wanted and funded	Not wanted and funded						



Wanted and funded



Not wanted and funded



Wanted and not funded

22

Each new Village Head builds new office

'It's about pride. Here when you're elected as a new Village Head, you build a new Village Office'

When I first tried to find the Village Office by ojek, the driver asked, *'which one do you mean?'*. He said there were several which don't operate anymore but are still referred to as village offices. Some are abandoned and some have been turned into stores. He explained it was common for each newly elected Village Head to build a new office after his election. *'The new and the old Village Heads don't get along at all, so the new one doesn't want to work in his opponent's office'*.

The new current village office (pictured) is still under construction. Eventually it will be two storied. Village office staff said that the Village Head purchased land himself and started construction one year ago, but he rarely comes to the office, even though, like other offices built before, it is in his own sub-village and just a short walk from his home. Another member of staff who is close to the Village Head said that the cost of the office will be covered by the Village Fund eventually. He said that other villages did not necessarily do this and had permanent offices.

Field Notes, Ojek Driver, NTB



● A new Village Office built for a new Village Head

same village shared with us that he had been on a training course in Malang where he saw the benefits of having a *'one roof policy'* with all Village Officials sharing a single building. But he was also anxious that *'in the future, Village Funds will not be allowed to be used to develop the Village Office'*, so they are rapidly building a two-story Village Office. In another village, whenever a new Village Head is appointed it is believed that a new Village Office should be built close to his home. This practice has been in place for some time as it is also believed that *'the new and the old Village Head don't get along at all, so you don't want to work in your opponents office'* (see Box 22). In the only village which did not have a Village Office, the Village Head is *'renting out'* the front room in his house for IDR 3million per month, which is paid from the ADD funds. He also recently built a better toilet beside his house, again using Village Funds, as he anticipates *'that there will be consultants coming from Jakarta and the district office in the future'*.

With such a strong focus on roads, drainage channels and the Village Office, we observed and it was also expressed, in particular by the youth, that there is a mis-match between what is being prioritized and what is actually needed in many villages. In several villages irrigation and access to drinking water are clearly major problems. People were told that these key priority projects were too expensive or should be funded only by the national government, or that other less needed priorities are *'currently more important'*. For example, in one village a farmer shared that the former Village Head and Bupati had explained that they cannot have water projects, *'because they are too expensive in*

'Not enough money to fund village priorities like drinking water and irrigation'

(Village Head, Sulawesi)



● A bridge renovated with Village Funds, yet it is just downstream from another bridge – Aceh

this area' and that there is 'no budget for our area because the District is very poor'. In this village in Sulawesi there is a water source behind the village in the hills and the army has managed to construct a large pipe to channel water to their complex, but the rest of the village is suffering with water shortage and irrigation problems.

In the village in NTB where they are building the new Village Office, a dam had been built with other funds to serve the neighbouring village and compensation provided to the village for the land it was built upon. However, no irrigation channels come from this dam to the village. Here people shared that there continues to be a severe lack of water resulting in a six month dry season when no crops can be grown and only a single crop per year. The drinking water supply is also low, and a farmer shared that he has to wait until 1am to get water. He doesn't wash for three days and instead takes his dirty clothes to the district office to clean them there, saying 'we try to use water as efficiently as possible'. Nevertheless, the village funds are being used for roads and the Village Office. Some young farmers told us that water supply is 'the central government's responsibility', and 'there had been discussions with the central government but nothing had happened yet'. Similarly in another village irrigation is seen as the priority. The Sub-Village Head we lived with shared that the central government has visited the village for discussions but he did not understand why they do not have any irrigation programmes.

In some villages, funds were spent on bridges which nobody could corroborate as priorities. In the smallest village in Aceh an old bridge is being renovated with Village Funds, when just downstream is another bridge that has already

been built using the provincial budget. The Imam's wife stated that her husband wanted this money to be used on the mosque because he aspires to a tiled mosque like other villages in the area. Other villages have spent money on religious buildings and to pay for the salaries of religious leaders and other mosque personnel and is not seen as contrary to the regulations. For example, in one village the IDR 700 million for this year's Village Fund is being used to 'build the village office, PKK facilities and religious facilities' (informal Islamic school and mosque).

Across all study locations people said the presence and role of the BUMDes is minimal to non-existent. In one village where people shared that a BUMDes is established, farmers told us that the 'BUMDes

23

Always needing maintenance

Recently, the paved lane connecting my 'father's' sub-village with the one opposite needed reconstruction because the PNPM work had been poor quality. 'It was ruined within six months of completion'. He told me, 'I saw the construction budget and they quoted the price of cement at only IDR 50,000 when it should have been IDR 300,000 per cubic. Did their grandma own the cement factory for that price?! Of course, we suspected they used less cement... no wonder it was damaged pretty quickly!'

I pointed out a stone PNPM project sign beside this lane, 'Thanks for reminding me about that. We have to destroy it soon... perhaps after the Election Day. The stone is misleading.'

Field Notes, Sub-Village Head, Sulawesi

is just a building' and is 'always empty, nothing happening there'. They explained that they had formed their own collective instead and sold organic products directly to the market. In several villages people, in particular the youth, said that they wanted BUMDes. In the same village where the BUMDes is always empty, some youth told us they wanted support from BUMDes to develop their fishpond industry.

In many villages the youth are starting to question the current decisions about what is funded and getting increasingly frustrated. They are often the ones trying to get information on their smart phones and are dissatisfied with explanations provided by elders. As one young farmer shared, 'why are we fixing things when they are already OK?' pointing out what he felt was the unnecessary, neverending maintenance of the roads. Another woman farmer, who is the daughter of the ex-Village Secretary, queried 'why do we still build roads and schools and replace the good ones – we should focus on other more needed projects'. Some worry that the focus on infrastructure will result in urbanization of their villages. As one young Sub-Village Head shared, 'I don't want our village to become like Jakarta, we need to keep the spirit of being able to ask neighbours to share... people in the nearby village have already changed, they have pre-prepared food at weddings now'. They consequently rejected the proposal to build a petrol station in the village.

24

Unilateral decisions

The woman Village Head originally was motivated by her concern for women's wellbeing in the village, especially after her fisherman husband left her. But people think she has become biased towards only helping those close to her. She manages things herself and is weak at delegating anything. The BPD say they have no influence as she makes all the decisions herself. Villagers told us that they did not dare to give any suggestions or criticise, fearing that it might have negative repercussions on their family. Young people are quite ambitious here and want encouragement to develop organic pond fish production and motorcycle repair workshop. But, they say, the Village Head does not involve people in her decisions. 'Her policies are subjective'.

Field Notes, Village Head, youth, others, Sulawesi

3.9 Communities are Left Out of the Process

People widely shared with us that there are very few formal opportunities to participate in decisions about village priorities but also that there is a limited appetite for participation in community meetings. Some farmers explained to us that these sort of decisions are best left to elites as 'it doesn't affect us small people'. People throughout the study locations on the whole felt that 'as long as promises are kept' then they don't want to be involved in lengthy deliberations.

Formal meetings that are held are often limited to participation by certain circles, as the ex-PNPM Village Facilitator Village Head explained;

'It should be just a small group that understands the issue, we invite some wise people in the village, like religious leaders, PNS staff (civil servants). Others don't need to know everything, we can just share the information after the decision'.

Across study locations those who are included or not, is often contested and subjective. Sometimes decisions are made unilaterally (see Box 24). But where there is some collaboration this is often by invitation only. For example, the woman BPD Treasurer said 'I want to have a voice in the village but I never get invited'. She complained to the Head of the BPD who told her it is best to 'just let it go'. She



● Informal discussions and gathering at the baruga

25

We had more influence on decisions before

'I used to be a member of the OMD (Organisasi Masyarakat Desa – Village Society Organisation) participating in the village deliberation processes. Together with BPD members, we discussed and had a say on what sort of development work was really needed by the village. But everything has changed since 2009,' my HH father, who is the Sub-Village Head shared.

Since the current Village Head took office in 2009, the OMD position no longer exists. My 'father' says this is a big loss as there is now no mechanism for people to prioritize their needs to the people 'above'. 'PNPM decisions come from the top to us below. And it is so easy to politicise such decisions at each step from the province level down until it reaches us.' For example, in the past the OMD identified that the village needed a well and brought this up in the Musrenbang (village deliberation). It was discussed with the all the members of BPD. 'We even made a map to point exactly where it should be constructed and then we signed the proposal after we all agreed.' But without the OMD, he feels all development projects are decided from above. The province undertook the tendering process for work and 'selected winners connected to the DPRD, or some Bupati, or even the Governor himself. Then they would construct at a location without consulting the villagers.' He shared a case of another village which had supported the election of the Bupati and got a fourth well when his village still did not have one.

Field Notes, Sub-Village Head, Sulawesi



Project signage dumped behind the house

told us she is quite vocal and has strong opinions and feels that others who are not invited are also those who are vocal about village development. She said that the woman Village Head invites only 'women who remain silent in the meeting' and 'makes her own decisions and overrides us using priorities as an excuse'. But, by contrast the elderly father of one of our households is still invited to meetings, despite a speech impediment following a stroke, as he used to be a Village Office staff member and 'is close to the Village Head'.

In some locations the people felt that consultations and community meetings have diminished in recent times. In the village where the election was taking place this was because the Village Society Organisation was disbanded in 2009 when the new Village Head was elected (see Box 25). In another village, recent unrest and conflict has meant that if there are any community meetings the army and police have to oversee the meetings to maintain peace and security. People said that previously the Village Head held meetings whenever there was a new programme, but nowadays these meetings

26

Tensions in the village

There are about 120 houses in the village divided into two settlements either side of the main road. These two areas have adopted different interpretations of Islam and tensions between the two have become quite severe. The Village Head has appointed all the village staff such as the Treasurer, Secretary as well as 'Tuha' (elders) from his side of the village. The neglected side of the village sees him as the 'bad guy' especially as he almost never visits this side. He shared his concern that if he visits he will face a riot and cites examples of people from this area coming to his house and stoning it. Chatting one evening with his wife, he clearly displayed his prejudice against the religious practices of the people from the other settlement. Talking with those living on the other side of the road the following was a common sentiment, 'There's always been conflict of interest in this village between those who benefit most from village development and those who don't. As an Aswaja, our right has always been deprived by the Wahabis as they have close relation to the Keucik'

Field Notes, Researcher, Villagers, Aceh



● Community participation in *gotong royong* to build the mushola - NTB

always result in a riot so they only hold informal discussions with selected people, the *Tuhas*, in coffee shops (see Box 26).

While most village bodies had at least one woman representative member, in our Aceh locations, some men shared that women would never be involved in decision making, '*never ever will they be involved in decision making in Aceh – only in chores*'. In one village here members of the PKK were reprimanded and told they must follow the Village Head having tried once to take over the unused mosque for a *paud* (pre-school).

Meetings at Village Offices are rare, and as one Village Officer explained the Village Office is only open '*usually from 10am to midday*'. Our research team therefore found it rather puzzling that there is so much emphasis on the development and expansion of the Village Offices when they rarely used for official business or meetings. Information on display at the Village Office, if any, is limited to demographic details and organizational structures. No details are on display of current projects, planned programmes or any open disclosure of village budgets.

The lack of interest in formal community meetings or visiting the Village Office plays out across the study locations with a strong preference among

most people for informally sharing information. As well as casual conversation, typically deliberations take place in a gazebo or '*baruga*' erected outside people's houses. These are focal points for the sharing of information, viewpoints, stories and gossip but also, as one Sub-Village Head in NTB explained, '*it not just about sharing information but if you have a burden in your heart you can share with your neighbours here*'.

The only widespread participatory practice is involvement in *gotong royong* and some other community activities such as prayer gatherings, weddings and funerals. In one of the villages in NTB, while we were living there, a *mushola* was being constructed in the neighboring sub-village and they had the ground breaking ceremony. A *rota* system for construction work and food preparation had operated each day which people felt obliged and willing to participate in. Only in Aceh did we hear an unwillingness to voluntarily participate in community activities as people expected to be paid for any manual labour.

'We need an honest person to manage this'

(Village Secretary, Sulawesi)

3.10 Only Upwards Accountability

As mentioned earlier, it is apparent across the study locations that there is an increasing awareness and concern about the requirements for accountability. The new regulations are described by one Village Secretary in NTB as *'money that has manuals that cannot be breached'* and by another village officer worried, *'right now we can't play around with the budget as district government are overseeing us more'*. This perceived increased upward accountability is worrying Village Officers and they fear making mistakes. In turn this concern leads to some degree of paralysis and a general increased unwillingness to sign documents. As the brother in law of the traditional healer Village Head explained *'if you play with it (funds) to even buy a pack of cigarettes you can go to jail, because Jokowi government wants to beat corruption'*. In one village the Treasurer is trying to distance himself from any responsibility or involvement in the management of village affairs. When we met with him he insisted that he is not part of the village structure and claimed this is stated in the regulations, although we found his position clearly marked in the organogram displayed at the Village Office. He went on to explain to us that, *'if you were a KPK person it will not be difficult for you to find mistakes in our financial report, you wouldn't even have to look further'*. His wife worried for him, *'how come such an important position (as Treasurer) is not in the village structure and gets such a small salary'*.

With the current focus on physical infrastructure projects, some people also noted that the Village Heads will not be able to *'get away with it'* when there is clearly no evidence of construction. As the Village Secretary and a Sub-Village Head warned in their area where the election was taking place, from the IDR 700 million Village Fund the only item that can be seen to have been built is a 20-metre long wall at the Village Office and *pustu* (health post) next door. They shared that the previous Village Head had managed IDR 800 million budget and could never explain how the money was used.

27

Withdrawal of power from the village

The village had implemented three projects with PNPM funding over the last five years. Two were construction; village roads and improvements to the school. These were liked, especially by members of the BPD as they improved village infrastructure but did not give money directly to individuals. The third was a savings and loan programme for women and it was this one which caused lots of problems.

My host mother had been the treasurer of this programme. Her experience was so bad she said she did not want to be *'be part of government programme again. Besides, my husband will not give his permission for me anymore'*. The principle was simple. Women would be given loans to start small enterprises based on their plan and ability to pay back. But money was embezzled by coordinators and those who actually took loans did not pay back. People accused the coordinators of corruption. The Village Head was implicated. A court case ensued and the media has gotten involved. Rumours circulated that the funding for one of the candidates in the Village Head election came from this savings and loan fund.

With the court case still underway, all decisions for the village have now been withdrawn from the village level and are made at the district level.

Field Notes, Former Treasurer, Sulawesi

'Everyone is OK with the corruption as long as promises are fulfilled'

(Farmer, echoing others views on acceptance of corruption)

People in the village recalled that:

'we pushed and pushed for him to explain what the money had been spent on during those years of he was in office as we had got nothing. Yet, in the village meeting in front of everyone, he could only account for the last three years. What had happened to the years before? (He was in the post for seven years).'

The Village Secretary added had that the Village Head had failed to prove himself to the BPD or the *camat*, where the budget is much bigger (IDR 1.4billion), *'we need an honest person to manage this'*. It is understood by many that the village must now *'prove first they can indeed manage the budget'* and audit concerns loom large. As the woman Ibu President Village Head explained, *'the ADD budget will be audited by the national level (Inspektorat) and DD budget by BPK (Badan Pengawas Keuangan, Finance Inspectorate Agency)'*.

Even though there is increased concern regarding accountability, we still encountered a high degree of openness on the practice of taking cuts and commission from Village Funds. These practices are normalised and accepted within the village apparatus and also with the district government (see Boxes 27, 28 & 29). A farmer succinctly noted what many others inferred, *'everyone is OK with the corruption as long as promises are fulfilled'*. One Village Head explained that for some

'Money that has manuals that cannot be breached'

(Village Secretary about the accountability of the Village Law, NTB)

programmes *'the dinas officer will deal with the village official to negotiate 10-20% of the budget to go to the department official'*. In this case, he elaborated that the village will need to search for other budgets to accomplish all the programmes, and *'his position is not safe'* as he is responsible for all payments. He explained that *'sometimes I have to replace the budget shortfall from my own pocket'*. Another Village Secretary shared that it is *'OK to take any savings made on expenses- say 20%'* from the Village Fund as he feels this reflects on their efficiency *'we deserve this if we are efficient in spending all this money'*. Another Sub-Village Head also shared with us that it is accepted that if he manages to get a project for his community then he is entitled to some benefits for his efforts. For an IDR 18million fisheries project that he recently *'won'* he explained that he took IDR 3million for himself, and the workers knew about this and were fine with the arrangement.

Table 11: Village Election Costs

Village	Year of last election	Range of candidate spend	No of candidates	Total estimated cost
A3	2013		2	
NT3	2014			
CJ2	2011	IDR 300 million	2	IDR 600 million
SS2		IDR 100 million	2	IDR 100 million
EJ1	2012	IDR 200 million	3	IDR 600 million
SS1	2015	IDR 100-200 million	4	IDR 600 million
A1	2015		3	

A couple of cases indicated that the village apparatus is not trusted by the sub-district and district. In one of the villages in Aceh, the current Village Head has been told he cannot stand for re-election and all village meetings are supervised. In another village, there is an ongoing court case and decision making powers have been rescinded (see Box 27).

The costs for running in village elections is high (see table 11). People openly shared that it costs between IDR 100million – IDR 300million to run for local Village Head election. Candidates typically offer payments for voting for them of IDR 20,000 – IDR 100,000. In two recent elections that were recounted to us by villagers, the winning candidates were the ones who provided the highest payment for voters (see Boxes 28–29). As a farmer explained, *'the candidate for Village Head should have lots of money for the election, then when in power the Village Head needs to get the money back'*.

28

How to get elected

In the last election there were three candidates. The first candidate paid IDR20,000 per vote; the second candidate IDR 30,000 per vote; and the 3rd candidate, who won, IDR 50,000 per vote. As well as providing the highest payment for voters, the winning candidate also got the approval from the key religious leader which made a huge difference. He visited the religious leader many times, and after one visit the religious leader put a white flag outside the front of his house which signaled he was voting for the 3rd candidate. Once the flag went up then all the villagers voted this candidate for Village Head.

Field Notes, Village Head, others, Java

29

Four Candidates Battle Out the elections

During our time in the village the elections were taking place and four candidates were jostling for the position of Village Head. These candidates were:

Candidate 1: in mid 40s is a graduate from an Islamic university in religious studies, is very involved in youth education in the village, is an *honor* teacher in the SMP and also teaches at a nearby SMK. He was recently granted PNS status by the Bupati and is known as a religious person. He ran for election the last time round as well and lost to candidate number 4 by 60 votes, supposedly because candidate 4 provided more money to voters. For this campaign he was budgeting IDR 100 million.

Candidate 2: a former caretaker Village Head installed after the issues with the previous Village Head (see Candidate 4) appointed by the Bupati and formerly a district office employee. Although currently back, he hadn't lived in the village for some time so people queried *'how can he know the village if he doesn't live here?'* Candidate 2 had the lowest campaign budget of all the candidates.

Candidate 3: is currently working in the army and apparently the richest candidate who owns his own cooperative, which was said to have made IDR 1 billion between 2004-2009. He had the highest campaign budget at around IDR 200million.

Candidate 4: is the previous Village Head who had an issue with the BPD after not revealing how any of the village funding was spent. He was not supposed to be allowed to run again, but on our first day in the village it was announced that the Bupati was going to allow his inclusion in the election even though he hadn't submitted his paperwork. This had created a very tense atmosphere in the village in the run up to the election.

Four days after leaving the village, the election result was announced and the winner was candidate 3, the military man who had the most funding and a successful cooperative business.

In addition to these costs for campaigning, which combined would be around IDR 500million, people shared that this year IDR 7million of the village funds was being used for the election preparation. This is the first time that the provincial government is also funding part of the election so their contribution is a lot less than it was previously.

Field Notes, Researchers, Sulawesi

4

Study Implications



The study has highlighted a number of important insights into the effects of the introduction of the Village Law on the motivation, workload, processes and need for support from the experiences and perceptions of Village Officials themselves.

The following study implications have emerged from insights gained by living with and sharing in the day-to-day lives of Village Officials as they adjust to the changes resulting from the introduction of the Village Law. These are further nuanced from the insights of their constituents whom we also stayed with or had extensive conversations with and they shared their perspectives of how they felt their Village Government had changed since the introduction of the Village Law.

We present the implications in two sections; from what Village Officials shared with us and from the research team's observations and experience.

What Village Officials have shared.....

On workload and responsibilities....

- Many Village Officials feel **extremely stressed** by the demands of the new Village Law, sometimes to the point of making the decision not to stand for re-election. Families are also concerned about their welfare and the longer hours they have had to put in since the Village Law was introduced. The stress arises not only from the increased time commitments but also from the increased responsibility of managing substantial funds and concerns about following new rules and the sanctions which might be imposed for mistakes (including fear of criminal prosecution).
- Village Officials shared they **don't have the confidence** to explore other possibilities beyond safe options of investing in small scale infrastructure, and do not appreciate that the Village Law can open up opportunities for alternative responsive investments.
- Given the additional demands of the Village Law, Village Officials feel there is an urgent need for various external administrative and programme offices to **rationalise their demands for village information** as the Village Officials spend much time responding to individual agency requests for information.

- Village Officials are still confused about their new roles and how the division of tasks is supposed to be managed. They note the overburdening of Village Heads and Village Secretaries with the mechanics of the Village Law and that Sub-Village Leaders are having to take on many of the community roles formerly part of the Village Heads' role. They also note the underutilisation of Village Sector Head staff. They feel there is a need to review the roles of the different members of the Village Government and **make sure that work and responsibility (and particularly accountability) is more evenly spread.**
- There are diverse views on the role of the BPD with some feeling hostile towards them while others recognising that they can provide support and community oversight. Those in the latter camp, including the BPD members themselves, feel the **BPD should be empowered and that their roles and responsibilities be clarified.**

On training and support...

- Several Village Officials **felt on-site mentoring is more helpful** than large scale training provided in hotels. They feel they need to have a trusted advisor who will help them navigate the new regulations who will be 'on call'. They say their experiences with Facilitators have not yet provided what they were hoping for, which is someone to provide them on-going support as they learn and use the new procedures.
- Village Officials were disappointed not to be able to contact trainers for clarifications after the formal training despite sometimes being given their mobile phone numbers and encouraged to contact them.
- They have established their **own informal networks** between cohorts of Village Officials who received formal training together. They draw on these to help clarify Village Law processes and to seek advice or the experience of others about the intended interactions with the Camat and Facilitators. Some suggested it would be useful to **have cross visits and more informal sharing.**

On Knowledge and Understanding of Village Law.....

- Village Officials said they need **specific clarifications** on the following;
 - Pooling of Village Funds.
 - Fund allocation formulas, especially provision of the rationale for different funding to different villages, given the range of village size and needs. Exactly what Village Funds can be used for and what they cannot be used for.
 - What district and national funds are intended to cover.
 - The official process for accessing Village Fund tranches and at what points payments from the Village Fund are required/ authorised for services provided (e.g. technical support, training, facilitation) as well as the rates for these services.
 - What means for complaints and grievance mechanisms for district and sub-district services provided to them exist, how they can be accessed and how they can be assured that use of these mechanisms will remain confidential and without fear of repercussions.
 - The role of the Village Facilitator and what they should expect from them in terms of support and frequency of visits.
 - Future status of Village Secretaries as village employees or civil servants as they remain confused about this as well as any information on the anticipated transition process.
- **Sub-village Heads feel that they do not know enough about the Village Law** and how to explain village plans, budgets and expenditures to their constituents.

What the research team observed....

- **Communities know very little about the Village Law** and what the changes mean for them and their potential participation, especially in identifying priorities. This study and other RCA studies have noted that most people have access to TV and that this is an influential medium for socialisation. Some young people in this study and other RCA studies are quite active using internet on their phones (and less often on personal computers) and shared that they like to search information related to their district and their village.
- **Young people were often quite engaged on Village Governance issues** (more than the older generation) and want to elect different kinds of leaders; younger, more energetic, with IT skills and not from elite dynasties which have dominated the village leadership in the past. Furthermore, the need for IT skills within the Village Office has started a trend to employ younger people with these skills.
- **Villagers do not realise that they have a right to and can influence village decision making.** In particular, the youth shared their frustrations that their needs were not being addressed and complained in some cases about 'useless projects' (like some roads, road repair, fences) or projects which did not benefit the village but benefitted a few elite.
- As well as influencing decision making, **people did not feel they had a right to accountability from their Village Government** although they often grumbled to us and each other. They are not clear about the role of the BPD and how this might help ensure downward accountability to them. Our interactions indicated a pre-occupation of the Village Government was with upward accountability.
- **Villagers do not read information currently on village boards and notices.** Villagers also do not like formal meetings and prefer **the informal opportunities** to catch up with what is going on in the village, for example in the evenings in the ubiquitous outdoor gazebos. In particular, this is where the Sub-Village Heads chat with their constituents.



Annex 1
RESEARCH TEAM

STUDY TEAM LEADER

Peter Riddell-Carre

TECHNICAL ADVISOR

Dee Jupp



TEAM MEMBERS



/ ACEH /

Dee Jupp

Marzi Afriko

Putu Adi Sayoga

Rida Hesti Ratnasari

Zikry Auliya Ghiffary

/ NTB /

Ni Nyoman Natih

Krisman D. Pandiangan

Iqbal Abisaputra

Peter Riddell-Carre

Thalia Shelyndra

Upik Sabaingrum

/ JAVA /

Aditya N. Cakranegara

Firkan Maulana

Rizqan Adhima

Pandu Ario Bismo

Siti Alifah Farhana

Yeni Indra

/ SULAWESI /

Andhi Susanto

Debora Tobing

Dewi Arilaha

Revyani Sjahrial



Rudi Yudho Sartono

Steven Ellis

Tasnim Yusuf

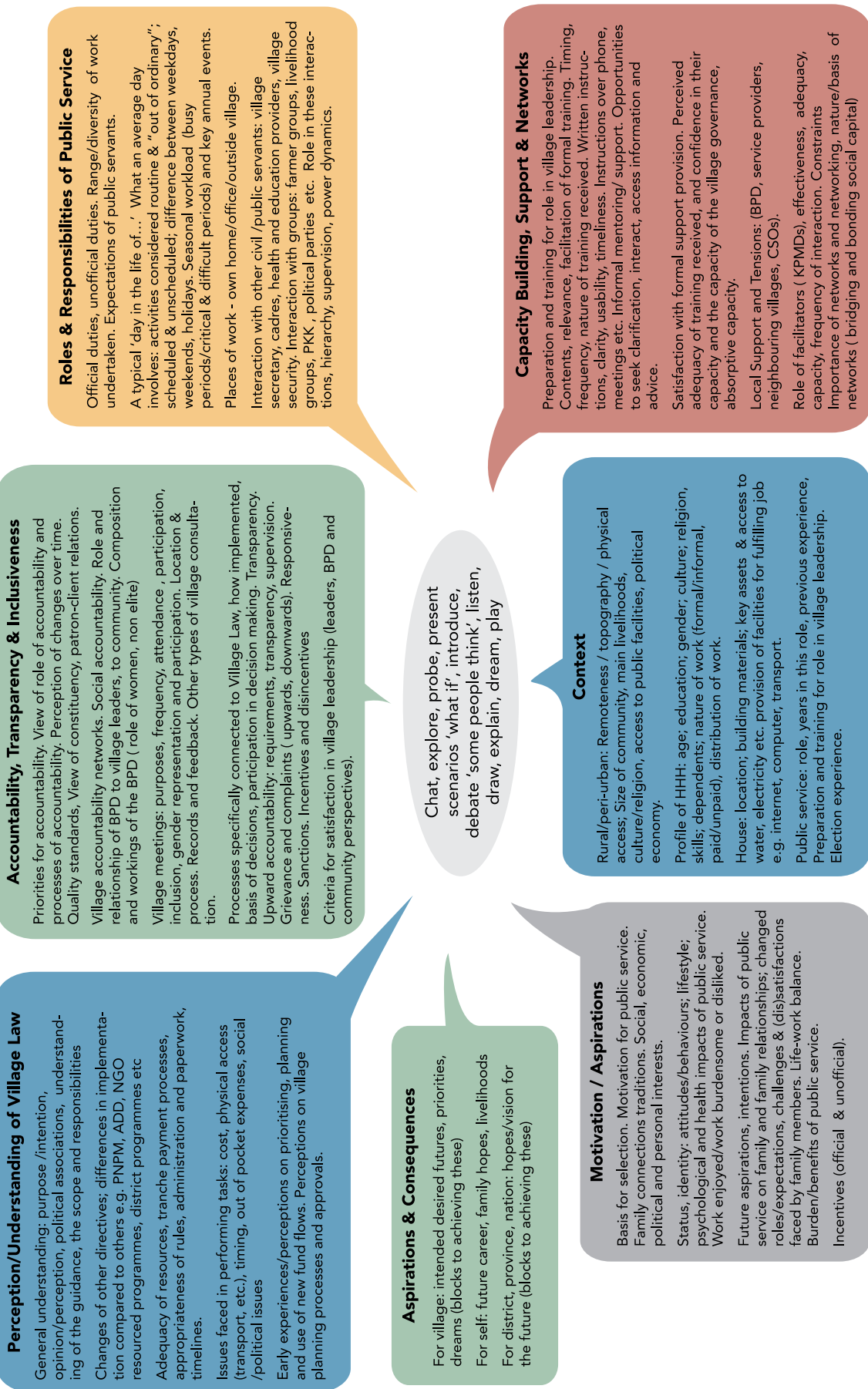
Yarra Regita

Annex 2
PEOPLE MET

		
125	/ VILLAGE OFFICIALS /	37
6	<i>Kepala desa</i>	2
6	<i>Sekdes</i>	-
17	Village staff/Local Government Staffs	2
18	<i>Kaur</i>	5
1	Treasurer	1
60	<i>Kepala dusun. Ketua RT/RW</i>	-
11	BPD	1
1	LKMD	-
-	PKK	25
5	Village law Facilitator	6
1,418	/ VILLAGERS /	1,139

Total met
2,682 people

AREAS FOR CONVERSATION



This Reality Check Approach (RCA) Study was carried out during December 2015. The study was intended to gather insights directly from officials of Village Governments and their constituents on their early experiences of implementation of the Village Law. Fieldwork involved study team members living with Village Officials and their constituents for several days and took place in eight locations across Indonesia. The intention of this report is to share these people's perspectives using their words and their views rather than providing an outsider interpretation. It is hoped that these findings can help in the design and provision of further support to the roll out of the Village Law and in ensuring that this support is useful and relevant to people on the ground.

KOMPAK

Jalan Diponegoro No. 72, Jakarta 10320 Indonesia

T: +62 21 8067 5000 F: +62 21 3190 3090

E: info@kompak.or.id

www.kompak.or.id