

## **Community Participation in Sustainable Development Goals: Experiences in West Java, Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

This research examines community participation in sustainable development in West Java, Central Java, and East Java Provinces, Indonesia, which aims to integrate sustainable development goals into policies and activities at the village level. Although the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) program has been implemented, citizen participation remains minimal. The research method uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through field research, participatory observation, literature research, and in-depth interviews with community leaders and relevant stakeholders. The main findings show that community groups play an active role in physical development and enhance local capacity in resource management, with significant support for the sustainability of SDG programs at the village level. The complexity of economic, social, and cultural factors has influenced their participation, as well as its implications for achieving sustainable development goals. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of community societies in the context of village development, with implications for the development of more inclusive and sustainable policies in the future.

Keywords: Community, Village SDGs, Sustainable Development, Local Community.

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini mengkaji partisipasi masyarakat dalam pembangunan berkelanjutan di Provinsi Jawa Barat, Jawa Tengah, dan Jawa Timur, Indonesia, yang bertujuan untuk mengintegrasikan tujuan pembangunan berkelanjutan ke dalam kebijakan dan kegiatan di tingkat desa. Meskipun program Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan (TPB) telah dilaksanakan, partisipasi warga masih minim. Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui penelitian lapangan, observasi partisipatif, studi pustaka, dan wawancara mendalam dengan tokoh masyarakat dan pemangku kepentingan terkait. Temuan utama menunjukkan bahwa kelompok masyarakat berperan aktif dalam pembangunan fisik dan meningkatkan kapasitas lokal dalam pengelolaan sumber daya, dengan dukungan yang signifikan bagi keberlanjutan program TPB di tingkat desa. Kompleksitas faktor ekonomi, sosial, dan budaya telah memengaruhi partisipasi mereka, serta implikasinya terhadap pencapaian tujuan pembangunan berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang peran masyarakat dalam konteks pembangunan desa, dengan implikasi bagi pengembangan kebijakan yang lebih inklusif dan berkelanjutan di masa mendatang.

Kata Kunci: Masyarakat, TPB Desa, Pembangunan Berkelanjutan, Masyarakat Lokal.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) program has been implemented in Indonesia since 2015. The implementation of the SDGs has become part of the global commitment to achieving sustainable development (Leal Filho et al., 2024). One concrete example of the implementation of the SDGs in Indonesia is the realization of the SDGs Village Program. The village SDGs are an integrated effort to

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achieve SDGs at the village level, primarily aimed at social, economic, environmental, legal, and community governance development at the village level. The implementation of village SDGs is regulated by the Minister of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration Regulation Number 21 of 2020 concerning General Guidelines for Village Development and Community Empowerment. In this regulation, there are 18 points of village development goals adapted from global SDGs, namely: villages without poverty, villages without hunger, healthy and prosperous villages, quality village education, women's involvement in villages, villages with access to clean water and sanitation, villages with clean and renewable energy, equitable village economic growth, village innovation and infrastructure, villages without inequality, sustainable villages, responsible village consumption and production, climate-resilient villages, villages caring for the marine environment, villages caring for the land environment, just and peaceful villages, partnerships for village development, and dynamic village institutions and adaptive village cultures.

Although the Village SDGs program has been running for a long time, citizen participation in this program is still minimal. Data from a survey conducted by the Centre for Indonesia's Strategic Development Initiatives (CISDI) in July 2020 involving 419 respondents aged 18-60 years show a significant gap between the government and the grassroots community. The majority of respondents stated that they were not aware of the SDGs, with 53 percent considering the SDG issues difficult to understand and limited to academics and social workers. Although 55 percent of respondents felt they had contributed to activities related to the SDGs, many SDG targets had not been well socialized to the public, especially among rural communities. Additionally, an online survey in April 2019 involving 53 respondents regarding the involvement of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) by the government in achieving the SDGs in Indonesia showed that many people have not yet participated in the efforts to achieve the SDGs. The low participation is caused by various factors, such as the lack of socialization, minimal public understanding of the importance of the SDGs, and limited access to information and resources needed to participate in the program.

The community is one of the important elements in the success of the SDGs because it has better access to resources and information, as well as the ability to mobilize change at the local level (Chun, et al., 2017). According to Wiemann's study (2015), village community participation in development programs such as the SDGs can be a significant driver in achieving sustainable development goals because this group has the potential to make substantial contributions in various aspects, including economic, social, and environmental. In several countries, communities play a role in national development such as in Mozambik (Brooks, 2018), Nigeria (Ahonkhai et al., 2022), England (Geoffrey Crossick, 2016), and China (Dai & Menhas, 2020).

In Indonesia, one of the regions that records low participation rates is West Java Province, which is actually one of the spearheads in the implementation of the SDGs in Indonesia. West Java has four SDGs centres, the highest number in Indonesia, which could be a potential for the success of village SDGs. However, despite West Java having great potential to become a model for SDGs implementation, public participation in this program is still relatively low. Data from the Indonesian Ministry of BPN/Bappenas (2023) shows that citizen participation in West Java is still relatively low at 38%. The majority of citizen participation is also still focused on top-down government policies that do not involve all aspects of life, especially the middle class. This is ironic considering the importance of this province in achieving national SDG targets. Therefore, research that captures the participation of village communities in the Village SDGs program, particularly in the West Java region, becomes important to understand the factors influencing their involvement and to identify strategies that can be used to enhance participation.

Research on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in recent years has shown certain trends. First, studies on the SDGs post-COVID-19 pandemic, such as those conducted by Bose & Khan, (2022), which examine SDG reporting by companies worldwide, as well as the role of institutional factors at the country level. This study shows that SDG reporting is increasing, although there are differences between countries with strong sustainability regulations and those that are more shareholder-oriented compared to stakeholder-oriented. Additionally, Sharma et al. (2021) highlight the importance of a circular economy approach in waste management systems to support a green recovery post-COVID-19 pandemic, which can help achieve UN-SDG targets.

Second, studies on the role of higher education institutions in supporting the SDGs are increasingly developing. Kioupi and Voulvoulis (2020) developed an assessment framework to evaluate the contribution of educational programs to sustainability, while Abad-Segura and González-Zamar (2021) explored the global evolution of scientific production and research trends related to sustainable economic development in higher education institutions. Caputo et al. (2021) assessed sustainability reporting practices by higher education institutions and found that attention to social and environmental issues is increasing.

Third, there is a trend in Big Data studies in the context of the SDGs. Hassani et al. (2021) highlight the impact of Big Data on sustainable development, while Elmassah and Mohieldin (2020) discuss how digital transformation can support the localization and achievement of the SDGs. Parmentola et al. (2022) examined the potential of blockchain in enhancing environmental sustainability, and Sætra (2021) proposed a framework to evaluate and reveal the ESG-related impacts of artificial intelligence (AI) based on the SDGs.

However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the role of community societies in SDG programs. A similar situation occurs in Indonesia, where SDG studies still focus on the fields of fisheries and marine resources, such as the research by Puspitawati et al. (2022) which examines the design of regulatory reforms in aquaculture and the urgency of legal reforms and trans-sectoral participatory enforcement models. Additionally, Hiratsuka et al. (2020) evaluated land and forest conservation initiatives through community participation in South Kalimantan Province. Akbar et al. (2020) examined the participatory process in planning practices in rural areas of Indonesia, with an evaluation based on the SDGs. Sumardjo et al. (2023) examined social transformation in peri-urban communities towards food sustainability and the achievement of SDGs in the era of disruption. Abidin & Prasetyani (2021) examined a model for empowering female farmers to support the SDGs, focusing on empowerment patterns in the agricultural sector. Dariah et al. (2019) examined the framework for sustainable development planning through a strategic planning approach involving various stakeholders. Mazdalifah et al. (2024) examined media literacy and ICT skills in enhancing women's participation towards the SDGs in plantation communities. Nurbaiti & Bambang (2018) studied community participation in community-based clean water and sanitation programs in rural areas. Finally, Azahari et al. (2024) examined the gender roles in palm oil plantation villages for the achievement of the SDGs, highlighting the role of women in livelihood security and their participation in civil society development.

Most research focuses on participatory initiatives in specific sectors such as fisheries, agriculture, and forest conservation, but none have specifically examined community participation in the more holistic Village SDGs programs. Therefore, this research has novelty in several aspects. The geographical focus on West Java will specifically examine the participation of rural communities in the Village SDGs program, providing a more contextual and specific understanding of this region. The emphasis on rural communities will explore the roles and participation of rural communities, which often receive less attention in community participation studies, yet have great potential in supporting the success of the SDGs program.

A holistic approach to the Village SDGs program will integrate various aspects of community participation within the context of the Village SDGs program as a whole, encompassing understanding, involvement, and contribution of the community in achieving sustainable development goals.

Therefore, this research aims to explore community participation in the Village SDGs program in West Java Province. This study aims to identify the factors influencing village community involvement in this program, as well as to examine strategies that can be used to enhance their participation. By highlighting the role and contributions of rural communities, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of community participation in achieving sustainable development goals, as well as offering practical and contextual recommendations for policymakers to enhance the effectiveness of the Village SDGs program in the region.

The writing argues that community participation in the Village SDGs program in West Java Province shows various dynamics that affect the effectiveness of this program. Community members play an important role in supporting the economic, social, and environmental aspects of the Village SDGs in Indonesia. They have better access to resources and information, as well as the ability to mobilize change at the local level, as evidenced by several case studies in other countries (Ahonkhai et al., 2022; Brooks, 2018). However, their participation is still hindered by factors such as internal busy schedules and the influence of social media.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

One of the community engagement processes that arises from social interaction is community participation (Gui & Carroll, 2022). Community participation refers to various concepts and frameworks that explain how and why individuals or groups within society participate in development activities or social programs.

One of the segments of society that has the opportunity to contribute to development is the community, especially in the context of the SDGs. According to Bowen (2021), community societies that are able to meet Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, namely: self-actualization, esteem, love and belonging, safety, and physiological needs. Meanwhile, communities from the middle class tend to participate more in development activities and social programs compared to other economic classes. Leadership that utilizes city assets and policies to encourage community participation have proven to promote positive collective action. Additionally, social media also plays an important role in reducing the digital divide and facilitating collaboration on development issues as revealed Gaál et al. (2014). Existing social systems, such as the values of togetherness integrated into ecosystem management, also provide a strong foundation for community participation in sustainable development efforts, as discussed by Ives and Kendal (2014).

Concern, both from companies and citizens, has a significant impact in supporting sustainable development initiatives. Research by Yu (2020) shows that corporate philanthropy contributions not only enhance the company's image but also support economic growth. Furthermore, citizen participation in local concerns, as emphasized by Thomson (2021) and Sciortino (2017), plays a crucial role in supporting local policies and governance, as well as promoting village development and SDG initiatives. The factor of literacy among the middle class, which enhances access to education and information, also strengthens their ability to participate in development initiatives, as found by Chun et al. (2017). The socio-economic transformation in China, studied by Postiglione (2006), emphasizes that the presence of education is key to social mobility for the middle class, while the ideology of 'parentocracy', as analysed by Barrett DeWiele & Edgerton (2016), illustrates how the middle class manages their children's education to maximize life opportunities, reflecting the reality of social inequality in the current educational context.

There are several challenges that need to be addressed so that community members can maximize their contributions to the SDGs. Factors hindering village community participation in development activities include time and resource constraints due to urban migration, as studied by Pouwels et al. (2022). The research highlights that the success of local participation heavily depends on the ability to integrate residents' schedules and needs with development programs. Bartik (2020) emphasizes the importance of local economic development policies to create jobs in the home region, reducing the need for migration to the city. Furthermore, the digital impact, particularly the use of social media among teenagers, as studied by Bozzola et al. (2022) and Roberts et al. (2022), also leads to social isolation and a decline in participation in community activities in villages, considering that teenagers are more likely to spend time on digital entertainment rather than participating in traditional group activities. By strengthening the role of community societies in sustainable development, it can enhance the ability to achieve SDG targets more effectively. An inclusive and community-based approach, as recommended by Akbar et al. (2020) in the context of community participation in village development planning, is key to ensuring that the contributions of the middle class have a positive impact not only economically but also socially and environmentally on a broader scale.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore community participation in the SDGs Village program in West Java, Central Java, and East Java provinces, Indonesia. This approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth investigation of participants' perceptions, motivations, and experiences while capturing the social complexities influencing their involvement in sustainable development programs (Howard Lune, 2017). To achieve the research objectives, the methods employed included field research and a Systematic Literature Review (SLR).

Field research was conducted in three selected villages: Gunungsari Village in Ciamis Regency, Kadugede Village in Kuningan Regency, and Kebonpedes Village in Sukabumi Regency, West Java, Indonesia. These villages were selected based on their nationally recognized achievements in implementing the SDGs Village program in 2023. The research was carried out from February 1 to September 3, 2025, involving participatory observation and field notes to gain a direct understanding of the program's implementation and the community's interactions with the SDGs initiatives. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with various stakeholders, including district government officials, village heads, other village officials, SDGs program implementers, private sector representatives, and middle-class villagers. These interviews aimed to gather diverse perspectives on the factors influencing community participation, particularly among the middle class, and to understand their practical experiences in supporting sustainable development goals.

Meanwhile, the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach was utilized to enhance the analysis by examining various studies related to community participation in sustainable development programs, particularly SDGs Village initiatives. The SLR process included several stages: identifying relevant literature through databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect; applying inclusion and exclusion criteria to select articles published in the last ten years; and conducting thematic analysis to identify patterns, key factors, and best practices contributing to successful community participation.

The following illustrates the SLR analysis process using the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) diagram (figure 1). This diagram encompasses stages of article identification from various sources, screening based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, and the final selection of relevant articles for analysis. The PRISMA diagram provides a clear visualization of the literature selection process in this study (Haddaway, Page, Pritchard, & McGuinness, 2022).

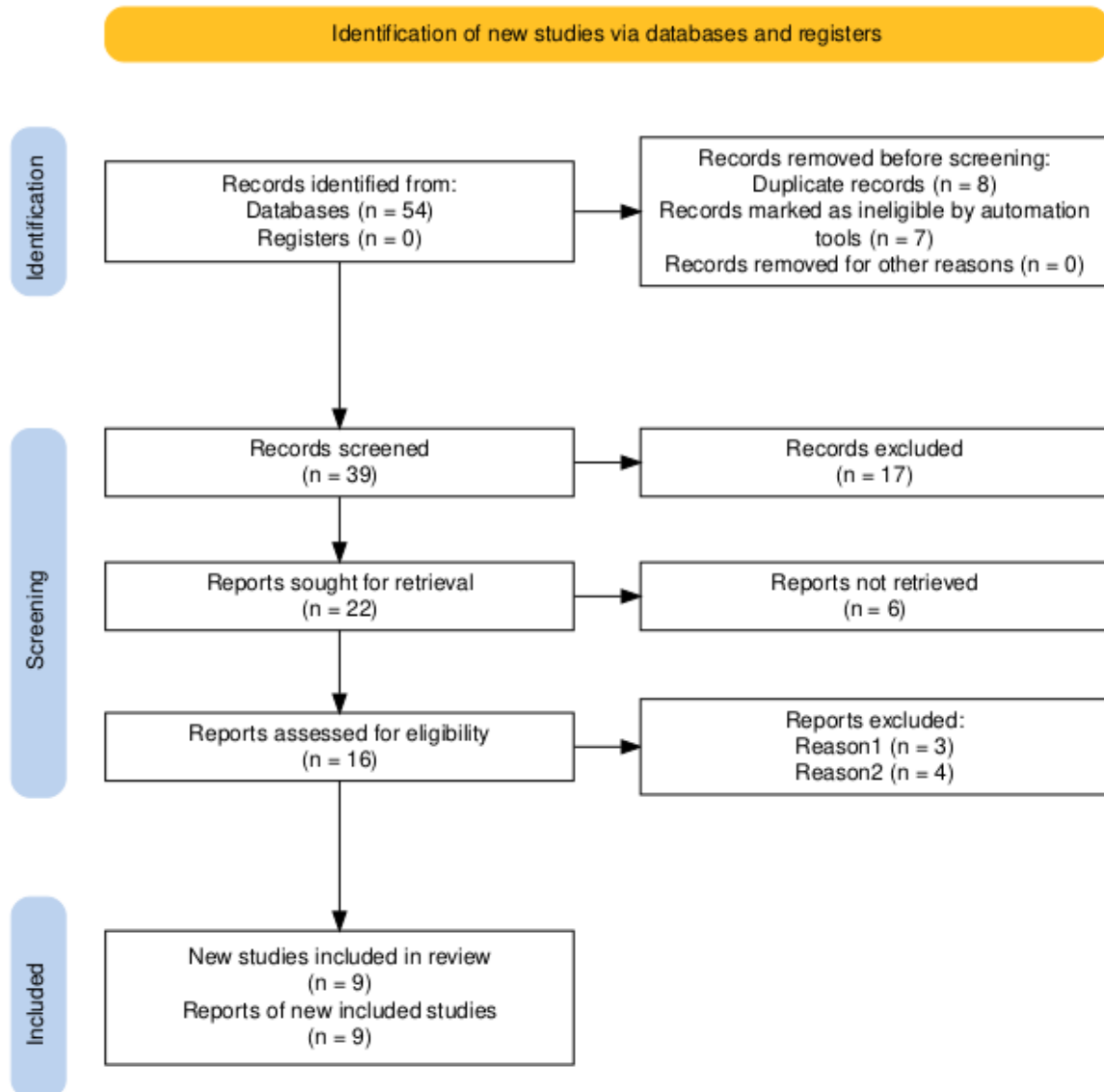


Figure 1. PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses)

Source: Autor Works

The data collected from field research and the SLR were analyzed using organization and presentation techniques such as restatement and data display in the form of tables, graphs, and descriptive narratives (Howard Lune, 2017). Data interpretation was conducted using the Miles and Huberman analysis model to identify patterns, themes, and relationships within the data. The results of this analysis are expected to provide deep insights into the dynamics of community participation, particularly among the middle class, in supporting the achievement of sustainable development goals through the SDGs Village program in West Java Province.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on data collection and analysis using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) technique, the following table summarizes the main references discussing social transformation, community

participation, and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. (SDGs). The main focus of the selected studies includes sectors such as food sustainability, gender equality, economic development, and local community engagement. These studies explore various contexts, including peri-urban communities, plantation areas, rural water supply, higher education, and fisheries governance, all of which contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. The literature selection process in the SLR ensures that each included study is relevant and provides significant contributions to the understanding of the relationship between social transformation, community participation, and sustainability.

**Table 1. Data Collection**

No	Reference	Title	Indicator			
			SDGs V	SD	CP	LC
1	(Sumardjo et al., 2023)	Social Transformation in Peri-Urban Communities toward Food Sustainability and Achievement of SDGs in the Era of Disruption	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	(Mazdalifah et al., 2024)	Media Literacy in Enhancing Women ' s Participation Towards Sustainable Development Goals in Indonesian Plantation Communities	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	(Nurbaiti & Bambang, 2018)	Literature Study on Community Participation in Community Based Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programs	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	(Azahari et al., 2024)	Mainstreaming gender role in oil palm villages in achieving SDGs	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	(Abad-Segura & González-Zamar, 2021)	Sustainable economic development in higher education institutions: A global analysis within the SDGs framework	✓	✓		
6	(A R Dariah, A Y Mafruhah, 2019)	Framework of sustainable development planning in Indonesia	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	(Puspitawati et al., 2022)	The design of regulatory reform in aquaculture in Indonesia: opportunities and threats of the implementation of SDGs in fisheries governance	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	(Hassani et al., 2021)	Big Data and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs ) at a Glance	✓	✓	✓	
9	(Sciortino, 2017)	Philanthropy, Giving, and Development in Southeast Asia	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: Autor Works

Table 1 explains various studies that focus on social transformation, community participation, and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with an emphasis on sectors such as food sustainability, gender equality, economic development, and local community engagement. The indicators used to evaluate each study encompass four main aspects. SDGs V (SDGs Village) indicates whether the research focuses on the implementation of SDGs at the village or peri-urban rural community level. SD (Sustainable Development) describes the extent to which the research discusses the goals and framework of sustainable development. CP (Community Participation) shows community involvement in decision-making and policy implementation related to SDGs. Meanwhile, LC (Local Community) assesses whether the research emphasizes the role of local communities in their contribution to sustainability and social transformation. With these indicators, the table provides a clearer picture of how local and participatory efforts contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

### Implementation of the SDGs in West Java, Indonesia

West Java Province is the province with the largest population in Indonesia. The population in West Java Province is projected to reach 49,935,858 people in 2020, with a population growth rate of 1.49%. The average population density reaches 1,412 people/km<sup>2</sup>, and the population dependency ratio reaches 46.57%. In 2019, the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) grew by 5.07%, reaching Rp 1,491,705.81

billion, with the manufacturing sector as the main contributor. Per capita income reached Rp 43.092 million, while Regional Original Revenue (PAD) continued to increase from 2015 to 2019, with PAD in 2019 reaching Rp 19.759.78 billion (Localise SDGs Indonesia, 2024).

So far, sustainable development in West Java has been considered successful. The success is evident from the improvement in various aspects of life. Quoting data from Localise SDGs Indonesia (2024), the poverty rate in West Java decreased from 7.45% in 2018 to 6.91% in 2019, but increased again to 7.88% in March 2020. The Gini ratio also increased to 0.403 in 2020 from 0.402 in 2019, indicating a rise in social inequality. The percentage of citizens without health insurance increased from 3.21% in 2019 to 3.63% in 2020. The literacy rate for the population over 15 years old rose from 98.48% in 2018 to 98.53% in 2019 and 98.63% in 2020.

The SDGs program in West Java has been successful in integrating sustainable development principles into the planning and implementation of local policies. This program includes various initiatives, ranging from improving access to healthcare and education services to the development of sustainable infrastructure. For example, the program to improve sanitation and clean water has had a significantly positive impact, with a notable increase in the percentage of households having access to clean drinking water and proper sanitation in recent years. In addition, efforts to improve literacy rates and access to education have made significant contributions to the increase in the Human Development Index (HDI) in this province. However, the people of West Java still face challenges, such as the low level of community participation in the SDGs, especially for those in certain community groups. Strategic steps are needed to address these challenges by strengthening social protection programs and optimizing the distribution of available resources. Support must also be enhanced with the active involvement of stakeholders. Thus, efforts to achieve the SDGs targets in West Java can proceed sustainably and inclusively, integrating various parties in supporting sustainable development in this region with the largest population in Indonesia.

### **Community Participation in Village SDGs**

Three regions that serve as models for Village SDGs development in West Java are Gunungsari Village, Ciamis Regency, Kadugede Village, Kuningan Regency, and Kebonpedes Village, Sukabumi Regency. The three villages have a positive picture in the implementation of the Village SDGs. These three villages have positive and good qualifications in the implementation of SDG indicators. The active role of community members who are part of certain groups, such as professions (farmers' groups, fishermen's groups, and traders' groups) and social ties (religious and community groups).

In their participation in the village SDGs, the community members in the three villages are very active. Based on the results of the investigation through interviews, it was found that the level of middle-class participation in the SDGs is very high. The research results show that the level of middle-class participation in the Village SDGs program in three villages, namely Gunungsari, Kadugede, and Kebonpedes, varies in each aspect of the activities. In Gunungsari Village, participation was recorded as high in program implementation and training workshops at 85%, followed by socialization and education (90%), and program planning and monitoring and evaluation at 80% each. In Kadugede Village, participation was relatively even with 80% in program planning and implementation, 85% in training workshops and socialization and education, but lower in monitoring and evaluation (70%). Meanwhile, in Kebonpedes Village, middle-class participation reached 75% in program planning and implementation, 80% in training workshops, 85% in socialization and education, and 75% in monitoring and evaluation. Overall, the highest participation rates were observed in the aspects of socialization and education, while monitoring and evaluation tended to have lower participation across all villages.



The comparison of participation levels shows that the middle class has a higher participation rate in all activities of the Village SDGs program compared to the general public and other groups. This shows that the middle class is more active and involved in various aspects of the program, from planning to socialization and education. This high level of participation can be attributed to better access to information, resources, and opportunities that the middle class possesses.

The types of community participation in the Village SDGs program vary from low to high levels. In Kadugede Village, middle-class participation in two main aspects of the Village SDGs, namely the development of clean water and sanitation facilities and the development of village infrastructure, significantly contributes to the achievement of sustainable development goals.

In the effort to realize a Clean Water and Sanitation Village, Kadugede Village focuses on building proper toilets for residents who do not have such facilities. The participation of the middle class in this program is divided into three levels: High Participation, Medium Participation, and Low Participation. Some middle-class residents with high participation levels donate money and capital to build decent toilets for their less fortunate neighbors. They not only provided funds but also ensured that the construction met good health and hygiene standards. Additionally, the middle class with a medium level of participation actively contributed ideas and suggestions related to the design and location of the sanitation facility construction. They participated in village meetings, providing valuable input that helped optimize the use of funds and resources. At a low level of participation, some middle-class residents contribute prayers and moral support to those directly involved in the development project. Although this participation is not material, it provides encouragement and motivation for the project implementers.

The active involvement of the middle class in the Village SDGs program in Kadugede shows that community participation does not solely depend on government assistance. Residents with financial independence can become the driving force in village development, ensuring that each project runs smoothly and achieves its goals. This participation not only accelerates development but also enhances the sense of togetherness and social responsibility among the villagers.

Meanwhile, in Kebonpedes Village, Sukabumi, the construction and improvement of village access roads is another focus of the Village SDGs. Middle-class residents also participate in this program through various forms of involvement. At a high level of participation, the middle-class residents contribute money and capital for the construction of village roads. This assistance enables the village to purchase high-quality materials and pay skilled labor. At the medium participation level, they contribute by providing ideas and suggestions regarding road improvement and construction. These ideas include the selection of durable materials and efficient construction methods. Support in the form of prayers and encouragement is also provided by the middle class at a low level of participation, which helps boost the morale and motivation of the workers and those involved in the project.

Therefore, the Head of Kebonpedes Village, Asep Mahmudin, appreciates the active role of the middle class in independently developing the village. According to him, the middle class in Kebonpedes plays an important role in ensuring the success of development projects. Their participation not only accelerates the development process but also enhances the sense of togetherness and social responsibility among the villagers. Asep Mahmudin emphasized that with unity and active participation, the goal of sustainable development can be achieved, thereby improving the quality of life for all village residents. The significant contributions from the middle-class residents, both in the form of financial assistance and creative ideas, have become the backbone of various development activities in the village. The moral support from residents who cannot contribute materially is also very valuable and helps ensure the success of the projects being carried out.

Research results in Kadugede Village and Kebonpedes Village show that middle-class participation in the Village SDGs program has a significant contribution to achieving sustainable development goals. These findings are in line with various concepts and frameworks that explain community participation in development, as expressed by Gui & Carroll (2022). Community participation can be seen as a process of community engagement that arises from social interaction, encompassing various levels of contribution ranging from non-participation to citizen power.

Thus, the results of this study indicate that middle-class participation in the SDGs Village program in Kadugede and Kebonpedes is very important and has a significant impact on achieving sustainable development goals. Support from several pieces of literature also reinforces this finding, showing that with active and inclusive participation, the middle class can become a driving force in sustainable village development.

### **Factors Influencing Participation**

The participation of the middle class in the Village SDGs program in Kadugede and Kebonpedes is influenced by various driving and inhibiting factors. There are several factors that drive the success of middle-class participation in the village SDGs in West Java. The research results show six driving factors, namely: the persuasion factor from village officials, the social media factor, the ingrained social system factor, the mutual protection value factor among residents, the philanthropy factor, and the literacy factor.

First, the factor of persuasion from village officials. In the villages of Kadugede and Kebonpedes, West Java, the persuasive factor from village officials, especially the village head and cadres, plays a crucial role in increasing community participation in development activities. This research shows that effective persuasion strategies can motivate collective action and increase participation in social activities. The persuasive factor from village officials, with a populist and collaborative leadership strategy, is very effective in increasing community participation. This approach, supported by the aforementioned research, shows that community participation can be enhanced through appropriate persuasion strategies, effective leadership, and collaboration between village officials and the community. In the villages of Kadugede and Kebonpedes, persuasive factors have successfully encouraged the community to actively participate in social and development activities, which in turn contributes to the achievement of sustainable development goals.

Second, the factor of social media. Social media has become an important element in modern life, including in villages. Social media, which is direct and practical, such as WhatsApp, serves as a communication tool that connects village residents and promotes village development activities. For example, when Kadugede Village built toilets and clean water connections, one of the residents used social media to invite other residents to participate. The presence of social media has become important to support the successful implementation of the SDGs in the village.

In the villages of Kadugede and Kebonpedes, West Java, social media, such as WhatsApp, has proven to be an effective tool in coordinating and mobilizing the community to participate in development projects. The study by Gaál et al. (2014) shows that social media enables knowledge sharing and collaboration among individuals, while the research by Bharati, Zhang, & Chaudhury (2015) emphasizes its positive impact on knowledge management and the quality of organizational knowledge through the use of social capital. In the context of those villages, the use of social media strengthens communication, enhances community participation, and promotes cooperation in efforts to achieve sustainable development goals.

Third, the factor of the ingrained social system. The ingrained social system, such as the values of mutual cooperation, is an important element in society that functions to bind each other and support the

completion of environmental work without reward. This system enables the effective implementation of village SDG programs, as the community is already accustomed to cooperating and helping each other in completing various tasks and projects.

In the villages of Kadugede and Kebonpedes, social values, especially mutual cooperation, play a central role in influencing community participation in village development activities. The research by Ives and Kendal (2014) highlights that social values such as mutual cooperation influence the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours of the community towards ecosystem management and conservation, which can enhance acceptance of management activities. Furthermore Thomas (2020) study shows that projects rooted in existing social systems, such as mutual cooperation, tend to be more successful in mobilizing community participation because they can adapt to community dynamics. Thus, the practice of mutual cooperation in these two villages not only strengthens social cooperation but also enhances the success and sustainability of the effective implementation of SDG programs.

Fourth, the factor of protective values among fellow residents. The factor of protective values among fellow residents serves to protect the community in terms of security, comfort, and order. The system found in Kadugede Village and Kebonpedes Village is the Environmental Security System (Siskamling). Environmental Security System involves each family providing a representative to guard the environment in groups at night from 6:00 PM to 5:00 AM. This system helps protect public and private assets from disturbances and threats from outsiders, as well as strengthen social bonds among residents.

In social development, the feeling of closeness among residents becomes important in society as a characteristic of social cohesion. Cheung, Chan, and Ho (2014) found that factors such as work-family conflict and medical costs are significant predictors of social closeness among residents in various communities, with Thailand showing the highest level of closeness and Taiwan the lowest. Environmental Security System in Kadugede Village and Kebonpedes Village reflects protective values that support social cohesion by involving residents in maintaining environmental security. This approach not only protects against external threats but also strengthens the sense of togetherness and shared responsibility among village residents, in line with findings on the importance of social factors in building closeness among residents as highlighted by Cheung et al.'s research.

Fifth, the factor of philanthropy. The philanthropic factor in the participation of village residents, especially from the middle class, is strongly rooted in Islamic religious beliefs, which encourage them to give alms and charity. This form of philanthropy is carried out daily, weekly, and monthly, with the aim of obtaining ease in personal and social matters.

In several discussions, the factor of philanthropy contributes to improving the company's image and economic performance (Yu, 2020). At the village level, such as Kadugede and Kebonpedes, philanthropy by residents based on religious values also plays an important role in supporting village development and strengthening social cohesion (Sciortino, 2017). Studies show that philanthropic practices can serve as an important mechanism in supporting sustainable development, influencing local policies, and enhancing the overall well-being of the community (Thomson, 2021).

Sixth, the factor of literacy. This factor is the main driver where awareness among the local residents grows, especially initiated by traditional leaders, religious leaders, and community leaders. They invite the residents to preserve the customs and positive habits inherent in the culture. Community leaders provide an understanding that maintaining the environment is very important in daily life. For example, the construction of clean water toilets in Kadugede Village serves to maintain environmental cleanliness. There is also another example in the form of assistance from the village youth to help the underprivileged as a manifestation of community care and an effort to avoid poverty in the village.

"We started a weekly donation drive from the wealthier residents to support orphans in this village. This initiative has been ongoing for many years, providing relief for them." (Agus, Interview, April 5, 2024).

The middle class generally has better access to education and information, allowing them to have a broader understanding of sustainable development issues and actively participate in relevant initiatives (Cheung et al., 2014). Higher education helps the middle class acquire the necessary skills to support development programs (Barrett DeWiele & Edgerton, 2016). Education also plays a key role in encouraging the middle class to proactively engage in their children's education. In Kadugede Village, the role of the middle class with high educational literacy becomes important in supporting SDG initiatives, both through a deeper understanding of development issues and through tangible contributions to infrastructure development and social assistance. Meanwhile, several factors hindering the implementation of SDGs in the village have two main causes: first, the residents' busyness with work in the city, and second, the impact of social media or digital media.

First, many residents are busy working by going to the city, so they have less time to participate, especially in Environmental Security System and mutual cooperation activities in development. For example, referring to the statement of a resident of Kebonpedes Sukabumi. Asep, 35 years old, works in the city of Sukabumi as a private employee. His busyness makes him rarely participate in social activities in his village. He has difficulty dividing his time between work and participating in social activities. (Interview, 15 Maret 2024).

The issue of job migration has become a hindrance to development in several countries. Research in China shows that restrictions on rural-to-urban migration can reduce participation in village development activities (Pouwels et al., 2022). Bartik (2020) suggests that local economic development policies can create jobs in residents' hometowns, reducing the need to migrate to cities and increasing participation in community activities. In this context, it is important to manage migration and develop policies that support local economic development to enhance community participation in village development. Secondly, another inhibiting factor is the digital impact that causes lifestyle changes, especially among teenagers who tend to prioritize entertainment (fun) and gaming (game) aspects. These two factors lead residents to live more in isolation and avoid participation or group activities in the village.

Social media always backfires. Besides being useful for life, it also holds the potential for harm. The use of social media by children and adolescents, as researched by Bozzola et al. (2022), has shown various risks such as social isolation and decreased participation in community activities, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic which increased the use of platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. Although social media maintains communication and online learning, excessive use can negatively impact the mental health of teenagers, reducing direct interactions and participation in community activities and neighbourhood watch programs in villages. Meanwhile, Tony Roberts (2018) highlight that although social media provides access to important information such as violence, distortion and manipulation of information can reduce data representativeness and community participation in collective activities. This highlights the importance of managing the impact of social media on community participation at the village level, where reliance on digital technology can divert attention from more direct and tangible social engagement.

Therefore, the driving factors for middle-class participation in the village SDGs program in Kadugede and Kebonpedes, West Java, must be effectively managed by all relevant parties. By identifying and utilizing factors such as persuasion from village officials, effective social media, established social systems, protective values among residents, philanthropic practices based on religious values, and improved educational literacy, it can help reduce barriers such as job migration and the negative impact

of social media. Good management of these factors can optimize the active participation of the middle class in village development, as well as ensure the continuity of comprehensive SDG program implementation. Thus, collaboration between local governments, communities, and other stakeholders becomes crucial to achieving sustainable development goals at the local level.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research has found that the middle class has varying levels of participation, with most taking an active role in infrastructure programs such as clean water provision and road infrastructure development, through two case studies in Kadugede and Kebonpedes Villages, West Java. This participation is influenced by economic, social, and trust factors regarding the long-term benefits of these programs. The middle class also makes a significant contribution by providing human resources and specific expertise that support the sustainability of these programs at the local level. The research findings illustrate that the participation of the middle class in the Village SDGs programs not only contributes to physical development but also to the enhancement of local capacity in managing and sustaining development outcomes. With active participation from the middle class, there is potential to increase the local community's independence in addressing sustainable development challenges. This research has novelty in its specific focus on the role of the middle class in the context of Village SDGs programs, which has rarely been studied in depth before. This research provides in-depth insights into how the middle class can act as agents of change in achieving sustainable development goals at the local level, as well as the factors influencing their participation.

However, the research also has a major limitation in its geographical scope, which is limited to West Java, so the findings cannot be directly generalized to all of Indonesia. Additionally, the use of qualitative methodology limits the generalization of these findings broadly. For future research, it is recommended to expand the geographical scope and consider a combined qualitative and quantitative approach to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of middle-class participation in sustainable development programs. Although this research makes a significant contribution to deepening the understanding of the role of the middle class in supporting the sustainable development agenda at the village level, it also provides a foundation for further research in a broader and more diverse context.

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