UDC 332

COLLABORATIVE ROLES OF STAKEHOLDERS IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PRIMARY EDUCATION SERVICES IN BORDER AREAS: A STUDY IN MALAKA REGENCY AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR LESTE

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ABSTRACT
This research aimed to describe, analyze, and interpret stakeholders' collaborative roles in improving the quality of primary education services in the border areas of Malaka Regency and the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste (*Repúblika Demokratika Timor-Leste or RDTL*). This qualitative case study was conducted in Malaka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, directly adjacent to the RDTL. The study site was East Kobalima District with direct border villages (*tapalbatas* or boundaries). The study site was determined purposively or based on specific considerations and goals. The focus of this research includes (1) Collaboration in Planning; (2) Collaboration in Plan Implementation; (3) Collaboration in Monitoring and Evaluation; and (4) Collaboration in New Standardization. We selected informants using the purposive sampling technique based on specific considerations. Data were then collected using in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), documentation, and literature study. The results showed that the primary education service and service quality in border areas, including Malaka and the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste (RDTL), were inadequate in facilities and infrastructure and human resources (teachers) and access services. Hence, efforts to improve the service and service quality of the primary education in border areas, especially East Kobalima District, Malaka, are the responsibility of all stakeholders, including the government, schools, and others.

KEY WORDS
Collaboration, role, stakeholder, quality of education services, border area.

Education is a fundamental right of society and one measure of fairness. It also represents an investment in human resources. However, many people in various regions still face a lack of access to primary education services, including border areas of Malaka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. We have seen such phenomena in various social media, both electronic and print media. Mostly found cases have shown that many primary education-age children are not in school, and many parents complain about the inadequate education services. The situation may be damaged school buildings, long travelled distances to school, shortages of teachers, scarcity of books, non-standard capacity, and unbalanced ratios between teachers and students. The condition of primary education services in border areas of Malaka, especially East Kobalima, which is directly adjacent to the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste (RDTL), is depicted in the following table.

Table 1 – Number of Elementary Schools and Junior High Schools, Teachers and Students in East Kobalima District, Malaka

Schools		Teachers		Students		Average Number of Teachers/School		Average Number of Students/School	
SD^1	SMP^2	SD	SMP	SD	SMP	SD	SMP	SD	SMP
10	3	67	51	786	522	7	17	79	173
Malaka Regency									
207	59	1873	1032	25261	12456	9	17	122	211

Data Sources: Department of Education and Culture of Malaka Regency (2019).

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[1] *Sekolah Dasar or Elementary Schools.*
[2] *Sekolah Menengah Pertama or Junior High School.*

The data above suggest that the distribution level of primary education facility development in East Kobalima District, compared to Malaka Regency, is only 5%, indicating a gap in educational facilities for each district in Malaka Regency. The average number of teachers per school suggests a tendency for a shortage of teachers in elementary schools (Indonesian: *Sekolah Dasar* or *SD*) and excess teachers in junior high schools (Indonesian: *Sekolah Menengah Pertama* or *SMP*) at both the district and regency levels. Besides, the teacher competency standard, which was still considered 'inadequate' according to the Minimum Service Standards (MSS) for primary education, is another aspect to be noticed. The data also reveal that in East Kobalima District, the average number of *SD* students was 79 students per school, and *SMP* students were 173 students per school. The average number of students in Malaka reached 20 students for *SD* and 70 students for *SMP*.

One study group consisted of 13 students for SD and 57 students for SMP at the district level. One study group consisted of 20 students for SD and 70 students for SMP at the regency level. Referring to the MSS, the study group's condition at the *SMP* level is not following the provisions (>36 students). Meanwhile, at the *SD* level, the number of one study group still follows the requirements (<32 students). The data display depicts the phenomenon of low public access to primary education services at both the district and regency levels, which is the government's responsibility.

Referring to the data in Table 1, the Teacher/Student (T/S) ratios in East Kobalima District and Malaka Regency can be presented in more detail as follows:

Table 2 – Teacher/Student (T/S) Ratios for Primary Education in East Kobalima District
in Proportion to Malaka Regency

Area Scope	Primary Education Levels	
	SD	*SMP*
East Kobalima District	1 : 9	1 : 10
Malaka Regency	1 : 7	1 : 8

Data Sources: Secondary Data Processing Results (2020).

According to the MSS provisions for Primary Education, the ideal T/S ratio for *SD* is 1 (one) teacher to guide, educate, and supervise 32 students (1:32), while for *SMP* is 1:36. It indicates that the main task and function of a teacher at both the district and regency levels is not optimal. The other problem is that many primary school-age children have not received primary education services in East Kobalima and Malaka Regency.

Other facts related to the phenomenon of not optimal primary education services in East Kobalima District can be seen in Table 3 of the Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) and the Net Enrollment Rate (NER):

Table 3 – GER and NER for Elementary School (*SD*) Level in East Kobalima District
in Proportion to Malaka Regency

GER		Number of 7-12-year-old Children	NER	
Total Students	GER Value		Total Students	NER Value
890	88.38	1,007	786	78.05
		Malaka Regency		
25,365	92.90	27,304	25,261	92.5

Data Sources: Secondary Data Processing Results (2020).

The table above indicates a gap in the absorption capacity of *SD* education institutions and the enrollment rate of children aged 7-12 between East Kobalima district and Malaka Regency, as can be examined through the table data of GER and NER of both district and regency levels.

Meanwhile, the GER and NER data for the *SMP* level in East Kobalima and Malaka Regency can be seen in Table 4:

Table 4 – GER and NER for Junior High School (*SMP*) Level in East Kobalima District
in Proportion to Malaka Regency

GER		Number of 13-15-year-old Children	NER	
Total Students	GER Value		Total Students	NER Value
562	64.23	875	522	59.66
Kabupaten Malaka				
12,454	91.14	13,664	12,371	90.54

Data Sources: Secondary Data Processing Results (2020).

The GER value of 64.23 for the *SMP* level in East Kobalima district, as shown in the table above, indicates that the absorption level of *SMP* for children aged 13-15 in East Kobalima District is not sufficient compared to that in Malaka Regency, which is 91.14. On another side, the NER value of 59.66 in East Kobalima District and the NER value of 90.54 in Malaka Regency show that the enrollment rate of children aged 13-15 in *SMP* at East Kobalima District level is still low, compared to Malaka regency.

Many problems exist and must be solved based on the existing background to support and ensure quality education services. Hence, all society elements with interest in improving the quality of education services and the government must be responsible for solving the problems. Thus, the researchers feel interested in and challenged to conduct this study entitled Collaborative Roles of Stakeholders in Improving the Quality of Primary Education Services in Border Areas (A Study in Malaka Regency and RDTL). This research aimed to describe, analyze, and interpret stakeholders' collaborative roles in improving the quality of primary education services in the border areas of Malaka Regency and RDTL.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Collaboration

Collaboration is the action of working together, especially to combine thoughts. In other words, collaboration is defined as a network or distribution of information, resources, activities, and capabilities of organizations in two or more sectors to work together to achieve goals that cannot be achieved by working alone. Cooperation in collaboration is different from the cooperation between the government and the private sector, where the first gives the work, and the latter does the work (Dwiyanto, 2012)

According to Bovaird (2004 in Dwiyanto, 2012), cooperation in the ideal collaboration context is partnerships, or work arrangements based on mutual commitment, over and above the regulation of each contract between public and private organizations. Partnerships involve more intensive and interactive public-private cooperation, each of which has independence and a commitment to realizing common goals.

Collaborative cooperation does not apply to the principal-agent relationship due to the presence of collaboration between principals. Principals become collaborating parties and act as agents for themselves at once. They agree to work together due to their same vision, which can easily be achieved when cooperating (Peter, 1998 in Dwiyanto, 2012).

Moreover, Sink (1998) in Dwiyanto, 2012, explains that collaborative cooperation is a process through which organizations with interest in a particular issue or problem try to find solutions together to achieve common goals. Based on Sink's opinion, public-private collaborative cooperation can be characterized as follows: (a) voluntary; (b) having an equal position; (c) having autonomy and power to make decisions independently subjected to the collective agreement; and (d) having transformational goals and desire to increase systemic capacity by combining controlled resources (for cooperating parties).

In practice, collaborating parties, in addition to having the same goals and concerns on a particular issue or problem, must also share resources, risks, responsibilities, and benefits. Such cooperation will be oriented towards long-term goals and therefore requires a high degree of endurance and interaction. The characteristics of a partnership and non-partnership cooperation are presented in the following table:

Table 5 – Differences between Partnership and Non-Partnership Cooperation

No	Characteristics	Types of Public-Private Cooperation	
		Partnership	Non-partnership
1	Nature of cooperation	Collaborative	Privatized, outsourcing
2	Intensity	High	Low
3	Period	Long	Short
4	Position of parties	Equal, autonomous	Not equal, bound by contract
5	Benefits and risks	Sharing benefits and risks	Benefits are considered as compensation for achievement while each party bears risks
6	Resources for implementing activities	Merged resources	Unmerged resources

Source: Dwiyanto (2012).

The explanation above shows that a collaborative approach can solve primary education issues and problems to improve service quality. It is possible because the problems and issues of primary education, including those experienced by the government and the East Kobalima District community, are principal and substantive. Therefore, problem-solving is no longer only the government's responsibility or certain parties but also the community in general (Suharto, 2012; Dwiningrum, 2011; and Tilaar, 2012).

The Concept of Stakeholders

According to Freeman (1984 in Friedman and Miles, 2006), the classic definition of a stakeholder is any group or individual that can influence or be influenced by achieving organization goals. In general, there are two views used in defining stakeholders. *First*, it shows the nature of the relationship between organizations and stakeholders. *Second,* it includes qualifications or aspects of organizations or the concerning parties. This simplification can be either strategic or normative. The definition put forward by Freeman shows the aspects of achieving organizational goals that influence or are influenced by stakeholders. It is a strategic simplification because the number of stakeholders is limited to those affecting the strategy for achieving organizational goals.

Almost all stakeholders are considered to be influenced by corporate interests to achieve corporate goals. Several individuals and groups considered as stakeholders include (1) stakeholder representatives such as trade unions or trade associations of suppliers or distributors; (2) Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) or activists who have been considered as individuals or stakeholder representatives; (3) competitors; (4) government, regulators, and other policymakers; (5) investors other than shareholders including creditors, bondholders, and debt providers; (6) media; (7) the community in general; (8) non-human aspects of earth or natural environment; (9) business partners; (10) academics; (11) future generations; (12) past generations, especially organizational founders; and (13) archetypes or memes.

The number of stakeholder group categories identified here is limited by a broad way in which these groups have been neglected (Friedman dan Miles, 2006). The advantage of the better stakeholder category is their tendency to embrace a more homogenous group of people. Meanwhile, the disadvantage of considering a better category is the chances of more significant overlapping interests and actions.

Based on Neolaka's study (2016), stakeholders in the context of primary education services can be divided into two categories of institutions and individuals, covering government, schools, school founders, school committees, school intracurricular organizations, traditional institutions, religious institutions, non-governmental organizations, students, teachers, parents, and society in general.

The Concept of Public Service Quality

Goetsch and Davis (2002) in LAN (2006) define service quality as a dynamic condition related to products, services, people, processes, and the environment that meets or exceeds expectations. Service quality is also interpreted as something related to the fulfilment of

customer expectations and needs. In other words, service is said to be of quality if it can provide products and services according to customer needs and expectations.

Furthermore, Evans and Lindsay (1997) in LAN (2006) define service quality from various aspects. *First,* from the perspective of "consumers", service quality is always associated with something good or excellent. *Second,* viewed from the "product-based" aspect, service quality is a specific function with different measurement variables in assessing quality following the product characteristics. *Third,* viewed from the "user-based" aspect, service quality is something that customers want or the level of conformity with the customer's desires. *Lastly,* viewed from the "value-based" aspect, service quality is related to usability or satisfaction.

The level of customer satisfaction is closely related to the quality standards of the goods or services perceived. The quality standard of goods or services determined by producers or providers are not necessarily the same as those defined by customers. The same service provided to different customers will result in varying levels of customer satisfaction as well. Hence, organizations need to identify and categorize their target customers into internal and external customers. Customers will be satisfied if their needs, desires, and expectation are met. Three levels of customer expectations regarding quality are (1) the most superficial customer expectations assuming "*must have or take it for granted*"; (2) the higher customer expectations than the first level, where satisfaction is reflected in the fulfilment of requirements and/or specifications; and (3) customer expectations demanding delightfulness or excellent services that attract customers (Tjiptono,1997). Some definitions of service quality above conclude that the principles (guides) or core values of quality improvement are: (1) the customer comes first, (2) all work is part of a process, (3) quality improvement never ends, (4) prevention is achieved through planning, and (5) quality happens through people.

When organizations are in the right quality improvement process, there are efforts to study the causes and utilize knowledge to reduce variations and activities that add no value to services or customer satisfaction. It can be done by referring to PDCA (Plan, Do, Check and Act)" proposed by Deming (in Imai and Kaizen, 1986). *Plan* concerns with identifying and/or clarifying inhibiting factors, adding or reducing the stages not required in meeting customer/community needs, defining problems and objectives to know organizational positions, and making sure the results of changes do not constrain the further process. *Do* means implementing changes in a small-scale pilot project, developing new processes for all parties, mandating feedback from members about why they do not approve the new process, changing the process if required by most feedback data, and improving performance. *Check* refers to monitoring positive and negative differences and asking end-users again how to improve the process. *Act* means stepping in learning outcomes accordingly, continuously making changes in the process by always referring to the cycle and starting with the plan.

Regarding dimensions of measuring the quality of public services, LAN (2006) proposed good public service indicators: simplicity of procedures, clarity and certainty, security, openness, efficiency, economics, equitable justice, timeliness, and quantitative criteria. Meanwhile, Tjiptono (1997) states that the characteristics or attributes determining the quality of public services are service timeliness, service accuracy, courtesy and friendliness, easy access to services, and other supporting details, such as air-conditioned and clean waiting rooms (Hardiyansyah, 2012).

Dimensions and public service quality assessment indicators can also be understood by identifying and eliminating some challenges faced. According to LAN (2003), in Hardiyansyah (2012), the challenges and constraints are the relationships between customers and service providers, variety of services, service officers, organizational structures, information, the sensitivity of demand and supply, procedures, as well as public distrust of service quality.

Besides, Mohamad (2003 in Hardiyansyah (2012) writes that the main problem of public services is related to improving the quality of the service itself. He continues that a quality public service depends on (1) the weaknesses in the implementation patterns, such as less

responsive, less informative, less accessible, and less coordinated service, and so on; (2) human resource support or an appropriate compensation system; and (3) institutions, in which the main weakness is the unspecifically-planned organization design in the context of providing services to the community.

Research Framework

Educational reform through educational democracy can be carried out through three aspects: (1) the regulatory aspect, emphasizing efforts to reform curriculum related to the formulation of educational goals and shift the work paradigm of teachers from responsibility to accountability; (2) the professional aspect, aiming to restore rights and authority to teachers in carrying out tasks; and (3) the educational management aspect, aiming to change the centres of education control and decision-making (Zamroni, in Suharto, 2012). The reform of the management aspect can be done by providing wider opportunities for (1) educational institutions to make decisions concerning education through School-Based Management (SBM) and (2) the community to participate in education implementation. Participation is an essential prerequisite for quality improvement.

Education quality improvement through community participation can be made by implementing collaborative management between education providers and the community and between government and all elements (stakeholders) concerned with education problems. Collaboration in this context can be carried out through collaborative partnerships in planning, implementing, evaluating, and providing suggestions for improving the quality of education services. The explanation above can be depicted through the following framework of thinking:
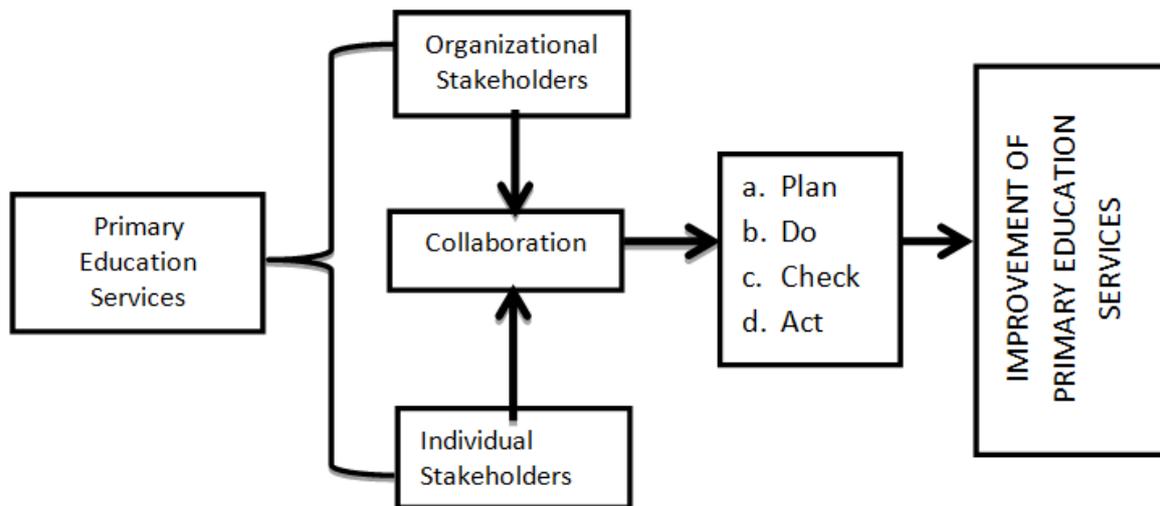

Figure 1 – Research Framework (Sources: Suharto (2012), Dwiningrum (2012), LAN (2006), Dwiyanto (2012)

METHODS OF RESEARCH

This qualitative research with a case study approach was conducted in Malaka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, directly adjacent to the RDTL. The research site was East Kobalima District with direct border villages (*tapalbatas* or boundaries), determined purposively or based on specific considerations and goals. The focus of this research includes (1) Collaboration in Planning, which is cooperation in planning and preparing school vision, mission, programs, and activities; (2) Collaboration in Implementation, which is cooperation in implementing planned school programs and activities; (3) Collaboration in Monitoring and Evaluation, which is cooperation in monitoring and evaluating efforts to achieve planned school programs and activities; and (4) Collaboration in New Standardization, which is cooperation in preparing and reviewing school vision, mission,

programs, and activities based on the results of monitoring and evaluation. We selected informants using the purposive sampling technique based on specific considerations. Data were then collected using in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), documentation, and literature study. Furthermore, the data were analyzed according to the techniques proposed by Miles and Huberman (2007) of data reduction, data display, and conclusion/ verification. Finally, the research results were validated using triangulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the focus and sub-focus in this research, the phenomena of collaboration are presented in the following stages:

Collaboration in the Planning Stage
In planning, schools must involve all stakeholders, consisting of four elements: school administrators (teachers, administration division), students, parents, and the government as the education regulator. Also, there are several supporting elements, including student shuttle, school canteen managers, traders (food and toys) around the school during school hours, non-employee school cleaning staff, learning book suppliers, etc.

In contrast, one of the state elementary schools in Malaka, namely *SDN* Lalebun, had never invited or involved student parents in preparing school planning documents. The school invited student parents to distribute student learning reports and ask for parents' approval for school policies. The things discussed in the meeting with parents were mostly related to students' learning activities, concerning the students' achievements and students' problems, such as low motivation in learning. Everything discussed was responded to well by the parents. Parents completely trust the school to educate their children.

Meanwhile, according to the explanation of a teacher in *SDK* Raisikun, at the beginning and end of the school year, the school always organizes meetings for parents, the committee chair, and the teachers to discuss new students, the curriculum, student attendance, the teaching process in the previous semester, and the teaching staff. Based on the informant's statement, it appears that parents' involvement as stakeholders in the planning process of school activities is still limited to discussing routine internal problems, namely the annually initial activities in the teaching and learning process.

Similarly, the other informant, the Principal of *SMPK* Kobalima Alas, confirmed that the planning of school activities always started with a meeting facilitated by the school, which presented the school committee, the school foundation, the principal, and the teachers, the school committee, and the parents.

Based on the research focus and sub-focus, the collaboration in planning (preparing vision and mission) has not been done explicitly because the four schools or research sites have not had visions and missions yet. However, in the preparation of school programs and activities, the schools and stakeholders have shown responses to the importance of working together (collaboration) in the management of education in the border areas of East Kobalima District, Malaka, although it is still limited to the participation of stakeholders who have a direct interest in the educational process.

Slightly different from *SMPK* Kobalima Alas, stakeholder participation in the planning process in *SMPN* Metamauk is considered good enough. For example, the management of *Bantuan Operasional Sekolah* (BOS), or the School Operational Assistance Fund, always begins with a meeting. The research results indicate that the decreasing level of stakeholder responsiveness in planning, such as from the educational management foundation and parents, means that the government must continue to socialize, enlighten, and even actively intervene in education management as regulators and education providers.

Collaboration in Implementation
Conceptually, collaboration in this stage is the action to work together in implementing school programs and activities that have been prepared and planned. Based on the research results, several problems need to be resolved by involving various stakeholders related to

the teaching and learning process in class, security, and the school environment. All can be solved with a collaborative approach.

Collaboration in implementation for primary education institutions in East Kobalima District, Malaka, is generally applied in two forms: (1) the implementation of various work programs offered by the government to schools to solve school problems and (2) collaboration between the school and the committee or the parents to solve the problems between the school and students or their parents. However, the various problems in the school environment, both *SD* and *SMP* in East Kobalima District, illustrate that collaboration must involve the government (in this case, the Education and Culture Office of Malaka Regency), the school, and other stakeholders.

The research results found that some students, starting from *SD* to *SMP* levels, made delinquencies, such as smoking, drinking alcoholic beverages, and berating fellow students. The reprimands given by the teachers and schools have not been able to stop such delinquencies. In this context, the school should take actual collaborative efforts by cooperating with either the local village government, consisting of community associations[3], *Bintara Pembina Desa Keamanan dan Ketertiban Masyarakat* (*Babinkhatibmas*)[4] and *Bintara Pembina Desa* (*Babinsa*)[5], local community leaders or religious leaders. This solution is possible since the presence of school institutions in the community environment is for the community interests and, therefore, becomes the responsibility of the community and the government.

Another problem existing within primary education institutions in East Kobalima District that can be solved through a collaboration between stakeholders is related to the teaching and learning processes during the Covid 19 pandemic. The *Learning From Home* or online learning program proclaimed by the government to help students has not been done optimally. During the Covid 19 pandemic, the schools were completely closed and replaced their direct learning process into an indirect learning process. Even though the schools claimed to have made a learning method by visiting students, some students and parents contended that such a technique was not monitored and did not run well.

To solve this problem, the schools can build cooperation with the community associations or community leaders to provide a comfortable, safe, and orderly place to study and help monitor the learning process. Furthermore, religious leaders or village security officials (*Babinkhantibmas* or *Babinsa*) can also help the learning process.

Based on the principals' statement in Malaka, *Pusat Pelayanan Kesehatan Olahraga* (PPKO), or the Office of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sports, launched a breakthrough program offered by the former head of the office, namely "*Malaka Rindang – Malaka Sehat*" (Shady Malaka – Healthy Malaka). The core of this program requires each school to plant economic plants, such as bananas, *betel* or areca nut, and others to meet the needs of teachers, students, and the surrounding community and to make the school green.

Efforts to make this program successful can be reflected in the policy to require students, parents, and the community to participate in the greening process, starting from clearing land, planting, taking care of the plants until utilizing the yields. Based on the data in the field, this program has been quite successfully implemented.

Apart from the success of the "*Malaka Rindang – Malaka Sehat*" program, another fact proving the implementation of collaboration between stakeholders in improving the quality of primary education services in the border areas of East Kobalima District is related to designing an agreement on the teaching and learning processes amid the Covid 19 pandemic between schools, parents, and school committee.

Findings suggest that collaboration in implementing the predetermined plans is carried out with full responsibility following the agreement. It is stated in an official document signed by the parents or students and the committee chair.

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[3] *This can be RT (Rukun Tetangga) and RW (Rukun Warga).*
[4] *The Village Leadership Noncommissioned Officer for Social Security and Order.*
[5] *The Village Leadership Noncommissioned Officer.*

The description of the research results above shows that the school political will to carry out collaboration is quite good, although it is still limited and internal. Collaboration carried out tends to wait for government programs or solve unexpected problems.

Collaboration in the Monitoring and Evaluation Stage

Collaboration in the monitoring and evaluation stage involves monitoring and evaluating efforts to achieve planned school programs and activities. Based on the results, collaboration in this stage is more related to teaching and learning activities in class and the use of BOS funds.

The principal and vice-principal internally conduct monitoring and evaluation in teaching and learning activities, either directly (supervision in class) during teaching or indirectly through teacher activities and student learning progress reports. Monitoring is also usually performed by the school supervisors, but there have been no visits for school supervision during this pandemic.

The findings of this research indicate that the principal also evaluates the learning and teaching processes. Such evaluation is usually done monthly, either directly (in person) and through written reports. Any deficiencies found will be warned. For example, teachers are asked to look for additional references in books or via the internet to complete lesson plans.

Furthermore, monitoring is also conducted by the school supervisor team from the Education Office every two or three months. This team visits the school and enters each class to monitor the teaching and learning process. Besides, the school administration, facilities, and infrastructure are also supervised.

During this Covid 19 pandemic, learning has been done from home using a home-visit strategy, in which the teachers visit student houses or vice versa. However, there is still a lack of parents' support for this strategy, so the teachers often ask students to come in groups according to the schedule to the teacher's house for learning.

On the other side, the informants generally claimed that the role or concern of the foundation towards the school had begun to decrease. Unlike the initial period of the school establishment, where the congregation or the pastor gave much assistance, the foundation now no longer conducts supervision or visits to schools. The schools build more active communication with the Education Office. Meanwhile, school communication with the foundation is limited to a discussion on school fees.

Almost similarly, the school committee and village government have not given much attention to the school. The village or district government never attended the school meetings, although the school invited them. The village government never discussed facility and infrastructure improvement to support schools during *Musyawarah Rencana Pembangunan Desa* (*Musrenbangdes*), or the Village Development Planning Consultation, and *Musyawarah Rencana Pembangunan* (*Musrenbang*), or the Development Planning Consultation.

Responding to this condition, through the FGD conducted during this research, the government, through PKPO, recognized the thought of building collaborative cooperation between stakeholders to increase the quality of education services, including primary education in border areas. However, there must be a government's political will to build networks or coordinate with all stakeholders, including PKPO, the district or village government, banks, foundations, and others.

Based on the explanation above, it can be seen that building collaborative cooperation between stakeholders requires effort and concern, giving that improving the quality of education services in border areas is absolute.

Collaboration in New Standardization (Revision Phase)

Collaboration in new standardization is the action of working together in preparing and reviewing the vision, mission, programs, and activities of the school based on the results of monitoring and evaluation. The main problem in primary education in the border areas of Malaka is inadequate teaching and learning facilities. Some of the educational facilities are

not functioning, damaged, and have not been repaired. In addition to the lack of teaching and learning facilities, the school building's condition is also apprehensive.

Schools should be comfortable and enjoyable places for all students. Therefore, it will be challenging to create a relaxing atmosphere for students if the supporting school facilities are lacking or even damaged, including the big problem of clean water, which all schools face.

Lack of clean water in schools makes it difficult for schools to keep their environment clean and implement sanitation programs. Toilets are not found in some schools—if toilets are available, some are not working. All existing stakeholders have to cooperate to overcome all the education problems in border areas, both private and state schools.

All stakeholders are supposed to unyieldingly find the right and continuous methods to solve these obstacles. So far, all stakeholders, both the school and parents, have not been able to overcome these obstacles despite various methods done until giving up. Even the local government has not intervened in solving everyday problems. As a consequence, the quality of education in the border area is not progressing.

The parents, as research informants, acknowledged perceiving the advantage of this new collaboration in terms of the school fee coverage. According to the interviewed parents, government policy through school tuition assistance, *Kartu Indonesia Pintar* (KIP), or the Smart Indonesia Card, and other scholarship assistance given to *SD* and *SMP* students helped them much.

Unlike the parents' and students' opinions, this collaboration in the new standardization stage for teachers is more associated with the learning method of the curriculum (commonly referred to as K-13). Most of the teachers, including students, find it challenging to adapt to K-13 in terms of the learning habits and supporting devices (for example, android cell phones or smartphones). Besides, the students have difficulties accessing the internet due to an adequate supporting network.

The teachers' strategies to deal with K-13 are limited to finding information through books or the internet. They explain the information to students. During the Covid 19 pandemic, the teachers have much responsibility related to learning, in which they visit students' houses and present the materials to parents and students.

The existing limitations in the border areas, the inadequate school facilities and infrastructure, and the parents' low socio-economic conditions confirm that *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* (*KTSP*) is the most effective curriculum for the area.

Findings confirmed that the government had helped the parents and students by providing school fee assistance for primary school students, yet implementing the K-13 curriculum needed to consider the geographic condition, the parents' socio-economic status, and the facility or infrastructure.

CONCLUSION

1. The service and service quality of primary education in border areas, including the border areas of Malaka Regency and the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste (RDTL), are inadequate in the availability of facilities and infrastructure, human resources (teachers), and access to services.
2. Efforts to improve the service and service quality of primary education in border areas, especially East Kobalima District, Malaka, are the responsibility of the government, schools, and all stakeholders.
3. One way to overcome this condition is by developing collaborative cooperation, which involves collaboration between interested parties (stakeholders), including conscious efforts to re-understand objectives, strategies, agendas, resources, and activities.
4. The identified stakeholders need to be empowered to build collaborative cooperation to improve the service and service quality of primary education services in the border areas of East Kobalima District. They include the principals, teachers, students, parents, community associations, community leaders, and the surrounding community as individual stakeholders and the government, PKPO, the district government, the village

government, *Babinkhantibmas*, the village banking institution, the church, NGOs, the education council, and the school committee as institutional stakeholders.

SUGGESTIONS

1. PKPO, as the local official unit directly responsible for the implementation of primary education services in the border areas of East Kobalima District, needs to continuously socialize collaborative cooperation to improve the service and service quality of primary education.
2. As one of the stakeholders representing the institution, PKPO must always coordinate with other official units in the regency. Besides, schools must be involved in various programs and activities in the border areas.
3. School management needs to adopt collaborative cooperation in planning, implementation, and evaluation stages to improve primary education service quality in the border areas of East Kobalima District.

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