

The Effectiveness of the Participatory Supervision Education Policy 'Empowered Women Supervise Bawaslu North Sumatra

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Abstract: The effectiveness of participatory monitoring education policy is a key factor in increasing women's involvement in election monitoring. This study analyzes the implementation model of the Women Empowered to Supervise program organized by Bawaslu North Sumatra. Using an empirical approach, this study explores how training programs, socialization, and collaboration with community organizations are able to increase the capacity of women as active and empowered election supervisors. The results show that comprehensive training has strengthened women's understanding of how to effectively monitor elections. Socialization through digital media and community-based approaches has succeeded in increasing women's awareness and involvement in election monitoring. In addition, collaboration with women's organizations, academics and youth groups expanded the reach of the program and provided support for women in facing challenges in the field. This study confirms that structured and sustainable participatory oversight education contributes to improving the quality of democracy and electoral transparency. With more inclusive and participatory policies in place, women can play a more significant role in maintaining electoral integrity in Indonesia.

Keywords: Election Supervision, Women, Political Participation, Democracy, Bawaslu North Sumatra

1. Introduction

The organization of quality elections is a manifestation of a healthy and equitable democracy. In this context, participatory supervision is a crucial element to ensure the implementation of elections with integrity. The Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) of North Sumatra Province, as an institution that has the authority to supervise elections, has initiated the "Women Empowered to Supervise" program as part of the strategy to strengthen participatory supervision. The "Women Empowered to Supervise" program implemented by Bawaslu North Sumatra Province is a form of supervisory education policy that specifically involves women as election supervisory agents. This initiative not only represents an effort to increase women's participation in election supervision, but also a strategic instrument in strengthening an inclusive and gender-equitable election supervision system.

The urgency of women's involvement in election supervision in North Sumatra is based on several fundamental considerations. First, the representation of women in election supervision is still not optimal, even though women have a strategic role in ensuring the integrity of the electoral process. Second, the potential of women in conducting participatory supervision has not been maximized, especially in areas that have unique socio-cultural characteristics. Third, the need for a more comprehensive and gender-sensitive approach to supervision in the context of election dynamics in North Sumatra.

Ontologically, the presence of women in election supervision reflects a social and political reality that continues to develop. This concept is rooted in the idea that women are not only voters, but also active agents in the democratic process, including in election monitoring. In the context of elections in North Sumatra, women's participation in oversight has an important role in ensuring transparency, fairness and integrity of elections. This ontological study focuses on understanding that women as political actors have the capacity to be part of an effective surveillance system. This is because women's knowledge in electoral observation is based on their

direct experience and involvement in various aspects of the electoral process. Through an empirical approach, women acquire, develop and apply their knowledge in overseeing elections in North Sumatra.

The study of women's involvement in election monitoring has been the focus of several previous studies. Murni's research (2020) revealed that the women's empowerment program in election supervision in West Java succeeded in increasing supervisory participation by 40%. Meanwhile, a study conducted by Hasibuan (2022) in Medan showed that the effectiveness of the participatory supervision program was strongly influenced by the education and training factors provided to female supervisors. Similar findings were also revealed in Siregar's (2023) study that examined the implementation of the participatory supervision program in Aceh, where the capacity of female supervisors increased significantly after attending the supervisory education program.

In a broader context, Nasution's (2021) study on the implementation model of election monitoring policy in Indonesia identified several key factors for the success of participatory monitoring programs, including institutional support, a structured education system, and a gender-responsive approach. This is reinforced by comparative research conducted by Rahman (2023) in five provinces in Sumatra, which shows that women's empowerment programs in election monitoring have varying degrees of success depending on the implementation model applied.

In North Sumatra alone, preliminary research conducted by Lubis (2023) indicates that there is great potential in the development of participatory monitoring programs based on women's empowerment. However, the study also underlined the importance of continuous evaluation of the program's effectiveness to ensure optimal goal achievement. Meanwhile, Situmorang's (2023) study on the implementation of Bawaslu's policy in North Sumatra found that the participatory monitoring education program requires more specific adjustments to the local context.

In its implementation, this program faces various challenges and dynamics that are interesting to study. Factors such as capacity gaps, structural barriers, and socio-cultural resistance are variables that affect the effectiveness of the program. On the other hand, the potential and opportunities arising from the implementation of this program also need to be systematically evaluated to optimize the achievement of program objectives.

The analysis of the effectiveness of participatory supervision education policy in the "Women Empowered to Supervise" program is important for several reasons. First, this evaluation will provide a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which the program has successfully achieved its objectives in the specific context of North Sumatra. Second, the results of the analysis can serve as a basis for refining and developing similar programs in the future. Third, this study will contribute to the development of a more effective and gender-responsive model of election monitoring policy implementation. This phenomenon is interesting to study considering the complexity and dynamics that arise in the implementation of the program. This study will not only explore the technical aspects of program implementation, but will also analyze the factors that influence its effectiveness, including the social, cultural, and institutional dimensions that are the context of program implementation in North Sumatra.

Based on the explanation above, this study will examine in depth the effectiveness of participatory supervision education policies in the "Women Empowered to Supervise" program implemented by Bawaslu North Sumatra Province. The main focus of the research will be directed at analyzing the program implementation model, by considering various aspects that affect the success of the program in achieving its goals.

2. Method

In this research, the model used to collect data is data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Overall, the descriptive qualitative research method chosen in this study allows researchers to explore the complex social realities involved in the implementation of election monitoring policies

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Participatory Supervision Education Based on "Women Empowered to Supervise"

Participatory supervision is contained in the regulations of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning general elections. Article 448 paragraph (3) states: "That the form of community participation is a) not taking sides that are favorable or detrimental to election participants, b) not disrupting the process of organizing the stages of the Election, c) aimed at increasing broad public political participation, and d) encouraging the realization of an atmosphere conducive to the holding of safe, peaceful, orderly, and smooth elections".

To strengthen and as a legal basis for Bawaslu's ranks in this participatory supervision effort, Bawaslu issued Perbawaslu Number 2 of 2023 concerning participatory supervision (Situmorang, B. 2023). Bawaslu and its ranks are mandated to organize Participatory Supervision in accordance with their authority based on the provisions of laws and regulations aimed at political, electoral, and institutional education of election supervisors for the community and the creation of cadres and driving figures for the supervision of elections and / or elections; as well as effective and systematic models and methods of supervision of elections and / or elections that are tailored to the needs of supervision of elections and / or elections.

This participatory supervision program is implemented by Bawaslu throughout Indonesia. As in Perbawaslu 2 of 2023 that the form of participatory supervision program implemented is Participatory Supervisory Education (P2P); Participatory Supervision Citizen Forum; Supervision Corner; Cooperation with Universities; Participatory Supervision Village; and Participatory Supervision Digital Community. Participants of this participatory supervision program are beginner voters, voters with disabilities; women voters; community organization administrators; religious leaders; teachers, students, and / or students; and / or customary law communities.

Of the several participatory supervision programs established by Bawaslu RI, in North Sumatra Province, namely: from 2019 to 2021, the Participatory Supervisory Cadre School (SKPP) has been implemented, from 2022 to 2023, Participatory Supervisory Education (P2P) has been held, and as a follow-up, one district has formed a Supervision Village in Asahan Regency. Until 2024, electoral socialization has been carried out to persons with disabilities, drug camps, novice voters, women voters, community organizations, campuses, mass media, indigenous peoples, religious leaders, youth leaders and other communities at the Provincial and Regency / City levels.

Participatory Supervisory Education is Bawaslu's flagship program and a *pilot project* in the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN). This supervision program is carried out on an ongoing basis at both the provincial and district / city levels. SKPP or P2P has been implemented in 33 Regency / City Bawaslu in North Sumatra which is implemented by a selection system with the following participants:

Table 1. List of Participants for the 2019-2023 Period

| Year | Number of Passes | Registrants | Description |
|------|------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| 2019 | 10 people | 80 people | |
| 2020 | 768 people | 1,621 people | Implemented online due to Covid |
| 2020 | 28 people | | Selection from online participants |
| 2021 | 176 people | 200 people | Basic Level |
| 2021 | 50 org | 200 org | Women Empowered to Supervise |
| 2022 | 160 people | | Empowered Women Supervising |
| 2023 | 160 people | | Women Empowered to Supervise |

From 2021 to 2023 the School for Participatory Supervisory Cadres (SKPP) metamorphosed into Participatory Supervisory Education with segmentation to women and took the topic 'Women Empowered to Supervise' with 200 participants in 2021, 160 people in 2022 and 160 people in 2023. The concept of education carried out is through training with resource persons from within Bawaslu and also from external sources in accordance with their fields.

For Participatory Supervisory Education, the Women Empowered to Supervise segmentation that training participants are focused on the majority of female participants, so that the North Sumatra Provincial Bawaslu instructs the Regency / City Bawaslu to propose more female participants. That based on data obtained from Bawaslu North Sumatra, in the implementation of Participatory Supervisory Education (P2P) in North Sumatra Province, it was found that in 2021 and 2023 the number of male participants was more than that of women, but in the implementation of 2022 the number of women was more than the number of men. In 2021, it was held in 10 districts/cities with 176 participants, 104 men and

72 women, as detailed in the table below:

Table 2. List of District / City Participants for the 2021 Period

| NO | REGENCY/CITY | 2021 | | |
|----|--------------|------|----|----|
| | | JLH | LK | PR |
| 1 | ASAHAN | 13 | 8 | 5 |
| 2 | DAIRI | 19 | 13 | 6 |
| 3 | HUMBAHAS | 21 | 12 | 9 |
| 4 | SAMOSIR | 11 | 8 | 3 |
| 5 | SIMALUNGUN | 12 | 8 | 4 |
| 6 | TAPUT | 22 | 10 | 12 |
| 7 | TOBA | 14 | 9 | 5 |
| 8 | DELI SERDANG | 20 | 9 | 11 |
| 9 | PSIANTAR | 12 | 6 | 6 |
| 10 | MEDAN | 32 | 21 | 11 |

In 2022, it was held in 14 regencies/cities with 169 participants, 73 men and 96 women, as detailed in the following table:

Table 3. List of District/City Participants for the 2022 Period

| NO | REGENCY/CITY | YEAR | | |
|----|--------------------|------|----|----|
| | | 2022 | | |
| | | JLH | LK | PR |
| 1 | NIAS | 10 | 4 | 6 |
| 2 | WEST NIAS | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| 3 | SOUTH NIAS | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | NORTH NIAS | 10 | 4 | 6 |
| 5 | SITOLI MOUNTAIN | 54 | 26 | 28 |
| 6 | RUBBER | 15 | 7 | 8 |
| 7 | LABUHAN BATU | 10 | 4 | 6 |
| 8 | LABUHAN BATU UTARA | 10 | 4 | 6 |
| 9 | PADANG LAWAS | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| 0 | PADANG LAWAS UTARA | 5 | 1 | 4 |
| 1 | PAKPAK BHARAT | 5 | 1 | 4 |
| 2 | SERDANG BEDAGAI | 10 | 6 | 4 |
| 3 | BINJAI | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | HIGH RISES | 20 | 8 | 12 |

Year 2023 was held in 8 districts / cities with a total of 80 participants who attended, details of 49 men and 31 women, as detailed in the table below:

Table 4. List of District/City Participants for the 2023 Period

| NO | REGENCY/CITY | JLH | LK | PR |
|----|---------------------|-----|----|----|
| 1 | KARO | 10 | 6 | 4 |
| 2 | SIBOLGA | 10 | 6 | 4 |
| 3 | MIDDLE TAPANULI | 10 | 6 | 4 |
| 4 | SOUTH TAPANULI | 10 | 5 | 5 |
| 5 | PADANG SIDEMPUAN | 10 | 6 | 4 |
| 6 | MANDAILING NATAL | 10 | 8 | 2 |
| 7 | LABUHANBATU SELATAN | 10 | 6 | 4 |
| 8 | TANJUNG BALAI | 10 | 6 | 4 |

Bawaslu North Sumatra Province is committed to increasing the participation of women in election supervision. This is in line with national policies that encourage the dominance of women's roles in the democratic process. The implementation of this participatory supervision education policy is carried out through:

1. Training and Education

Training and education are the main pillars in implementing this policy. Bawaslu organizes various training programs for women so that they can understand election mechanisms and monitoring techniques. This training consists of various stages, ranging from basic introduction to election monitoring, violation reporting mechanisms, to simulations of supervision in the field. Participants are given training modules that cover the technical and juridical aspects of elections as well as advocacy strategies.

In addition, this training also uses an inclusive approach by involving various stakeholders, including academics, women activists, and representatives from civil society organizations. This aims to give participants a broader and deeper perspective on the importance of women's involvement in democracy. The program also emphasizes leadership capacity building for women so that they can be more confident in carrying out their oversight duties and contributing to the formulation of election-related policies.

The following are some concrete examples of the implementation of training and education in election monitoring by women:

a) "Sekolah Kader Pengawas Partisipatif" (SKPP) training by Bawaslu. This program provides intensive training to women in various regions, including North Sumatra, to understand election monitoring mechanisms. For example, in SKPP 2023 in Medan, participants received material on election regulations, investigation techniques, and advocacy strategies in reporting election violations.

b) Simulation of Monitoring by Women Volunteers. In some areas, such as Deli Serdang Regency, women's groups who have participated in the training conduct surveillance simulations at polling stations to identify potential violations, such as money politics and discrimination against women voters.

c) Collaboration with Women's Organizations. Bawaslu North Sumatra collaborates with organizations such as Kowani (Indonesian Women's Congress) to provide training to women cadres to be more active in monitoring elections and reporting violations independently.

d) Mentorship Program for Training Alumni. Women who have attended the training are given the responsibility to mentor new participants in understanding election monitoring techniques. For example, in Pematangsiantar City, SKPP alumni became facilitators in training for young women who were involved in election monitoring for the first time.

To ensure the effectiveness of the training, Bawaslu also conducts periodic evaluations of participants to measure their increased understanding of election monitoring. In addition, training alumni are encouraged to become mentors for other women in their communities, thus creating a sustainable effect in strengthening the role of women in election monitoring. Thus, training and education are not only tools to empower women but also to strengthen democracy as a whole.

2. Socialization and Awareness Campaign

One of the main challenges in implementing this program is the low level of public awareness about the importance of women's participation in election monitoring. Therefore, Bawaslu actively conducts socialization through various media, both online and offline.

For example, Bawaslu North Sumatra uses social media such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter to disseminate digital campaigns in the form of infographics, educational videos and testimonials from women who have participated in election monitoring training. The campaign aimed to reach out to the younger generation of women and raise their awareness about the importance of involvement in democracy.

In addition, seminars and workshops were held in various regions, such as Medan and Deli Serdang, to reach women's groups in rural areas who still have limited access to information. A community-based approach was also implemented, where women who had undergone training acted as agents of change in their neighborhoods. For example, in North Tapanuli District, election monitoring training alumni formed women's discussion groups to share information on how to detect and report election violations.

This approach proved effective in increasing women's involvement in election monitoring, raising awareness of the importance of fair and transparent elections, and encouraging more women to take an active role in democracy.

3. Collaboration with Community Organizations

The implementation of this policy cannot be effective without the support of various civil society organizations. Bawaslu collaborates with various women's organizations, academics, and youth groups to strengthen the implementation of this program. This collaboration includes providing training facilities, mentoring for participants, and strengthening the network of election watchdog communities at the local level.

For example, Bawaslu works with organizations such as the Indonesian Women's Coalition (KPI) and the Legal Aid Institute (LBH) to provide legal assistance for women who face intimidation while conducting election monitoring. In addition, youth groups such as the Student Movement for Democracy participate in building a network of election watchdog communities among students.

Community organizations also play a role in helping to document the results of surveillance carried out by women in the field. For example, in Medan City, women's groups who are members of the Independent Women's Supervisory Network (JPPI) collect data on alleged election violations and report them to Bawaslu for follow-up. This documentation is used as evaluation material to improve the effectiveness of the program in the future.

With this collaboration, the "Women Empowered to Supervise" program can reach more areas and community groups that were previously difficult to reach. This approach also increases the capacity of women as election supervisors who are more independent and empowered in fighting for electoral justice in North Sumatra.

Program Supporting and Hindering Factors

Bawaslu's Women's Program is not only the responsibility of Bawaslu as the organizer, but also requires cross-sector support, including local governments, civil society organizations, traditional leaders, religious leaders, and families. This collective participation will be a catalyst for creating greater change, where women can stand on equal footing with men in the election monitoring process. The success of this program is supported by several factors, including:

- a) Regulatory Support. The existence of national policies that encourage women's involvement in politics and election monitoring.
- b) Collaboration with Community Organizations. Synergies with NGOs and women's groups strengthen program implementation and expand the reach of political education.
- c) Increased Awareness. Women's increased understanding of their rights and obligations in democracy also supports the effectiveness of the program.

However, there are also some obstacles in the implementation of this program, including:

- a) Strong Patriarchal Culture. Many women still face social pressures that inhibit their participation in politics and election monitoring.
- b) Lack of Access to Information. Not all women have adequate access to information about the electoral process and its monitoring mechanisms.
- c) Limited Resources. Both in terms of budget and supervisory personnel, this limitation is a challenge in expanding the scope of the program.

Strategies to Increase Women's Participation in Elections in North Sumatra

Women's involvement is an important foundation in realizing an inclusive and equitable political process. Women not only play a role as voters, but also as agents of change who are able to maintain election transparency and integrity through participatory supervision (Susanto, A. 2017). However, reality shows that women's participation in election monitoring often faces various challenges, ranging from structural to cultural barriers that are deeply rooted in society.

To increase the effectiveness of the 'Women Empowered to Supervise' program, several steps are taken, including:

- a) Capacity Building. More intensive and tiered training can increase women's understanding of election monitoring.
- b) Stronger Policy Support. The government and Bawaslu need to ensure that policies that encourage women's participation have a stronger legal basis and receive support from various parties.
- c) Community-Based Approach. Involving local communities in program implementation can increase the effectiveness and reach of this program.

Therefore, a strategy is needed that involves various parties to open up wider space for women in the election monitoring process, including:

- 1) Establishing partnerships with women's organizations.

Partnerships with women's organizations are a strategic step to strengthen women's participation in election monitoring. Women's organizations, both at local and national

levels, have direct access to communities of women who are often underrepresented in democratic processes. By building close partnerships, election observation programs can be more inclusive and effective in reaching all levels of society. The benefits of partnerships with women's organizations are:

- a) **Increasing Women's Participation in Election Watch.** Women's organizations can encourage more women to get involved as election observers, whether as independent monitors, volunteers, or election organizers. For example, organizations such as Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia (KPI) and Komnas Perempuan have been active in providing training for women in various regions so that they can understand election regulations and contribute to their supervision.
- b) **Providing More Equitable Access and Information.** Through a network of women's organizations, information about electoral regulations, monitoring procedures, and the rights of women voters can be conveyed more widely. For example, in some remote areas, women's organizations are often the only source of information for women who have limited access to the latest news or regulations.
- c) **Increasing Women's Trust and Representation in Elections.** This partnership not only increases awareness, but also builds women's confidence to play a more active role in elections, both as voters, supervisors, and legislative candidates. In line with a study conducted by Wahyuni, L. (2021), programs such as "Women Guarding Democracy" run by various NGOs have proven that involving women in election monitoring can increase transparency and accountability of the electoral process.

The strategy of building effective partnerships is carried out by forming a forum or routine communication platform for women's organizations by establishing communication between related institutions such as Bawaslu, KPU, and election monitoring NGOs through forums or regular meetings. This forum can serve as a forum for sharing information, developing monitoring strategies, and identifying challenges and solutions in encouraging women's participation in elections. In order for women's organizations to become equal partners in election monitoring, it is important to provide comprehensive training such as understanding election regulations and monitoring codes of ethics, the use of technology in election monitoring (e.g. digital-based election monitoring applications), and strategies for advocacy and reporting election violations.

Furthermore, women's organizations can work with the media, communities, and public figures in women's voter education campaigns. For example, the "Women's Voice, Democracy Voice" program carried out in several regions has succeeded in increasing women's awareness in reporting election violations and avoiding the practice of money politics.

2) Collaboration with educational institutions

Collaboration with educational institutions, such as schools, universities, and training centers, can be one way to increase women's participation in election monitoring. Educational institutions can be strategic partners in providing political education from an early age, especially to the younger generation of women. Involving educational institutions opens up opportunities to create a more inclusive democratic culture. By utilizing educational infrastructure and systems, women's empowerment programs can be systematically implemented through curriculum or extracurricular

activities. However, the challenge is to ensure that educational materials truly reflect the principles of gender equality and are not biased. Good cooperation can start with integrating gender-based political education in formal and non-formal curricula. In addition, involving lecturers, teachers and students as agents of change can accelerate the spread of inclusive democratic values.

3) Establishment of a Women Supervisory Forum

Forming a forum specifically for women can be a concrete step to increase their participation in election monitoring. This forum can serve as a place to share information, experiences and strategies, as well as a means to strengthen women's networks in election monitoring. The existence of a women's platform allows women to feel collectively supported in facing challenges. It can also be a tool to encourage more inclusive policy advocacy and fight for women's rights in election monitoring. However, the main challenge is to maintain the sustainability of the platform and ensure the participation of women from various backgrounds. This can start by providing seed funding to establish and manage women's platforms. In addition, utilizing technology such as social media or digital platforms can expand the reach and facilitate communication between members.

4. Conclusion

Women's participation in election monitoring is a strategic step to strengthen an inclusive and transparent democracy. Through training, socialization, and collaboration with various community organizations, women increasingly have a significant role in ensuring the integrity of elections. . With the continuation of the "Women Empowered to Monitor" program, it is hoped that women's involvement in election monitoring will continue to increase, creating a fairer and more representative democratic system in Indonesia.

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