




Collaborative Governance in the Implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program: A Study of Cross-Sectoral Coordination at the Regional Level

I Ketut Yoko Putra Kartono^{1*}, Luh Putu Mahyuni¹

¹Undiknas Graduate School Bali, Indonesia

 ikypk24@gmail.com *

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the cross-sector collaborative governance process in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) in Karangasem Regency. The study focuses on four main aspects of the Ansell and Gash model: starting conditions, institutional design, facilitative leadership, and collaborative process. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The research informants consist of stakeholders from local government, program implementers, and parties involved in the provision and distribution of local food. The findings show that the implementation of the MBG Program in Karangasem Regency is built upon a shared need to address child nutrition problems, poverty, and limited access to nutritious food. However, cross-sector collaboration still faces challenges such as resource imbalances, differences in capacity among actors, and the need to strengthen institutional coordination. Facilitative leadership plays an important role in building trust and shared understanding through dialogue, coordination meetings, and role adjustment among stakeholders. In addition, program sustainability is influenced by supporting factors such as shared commitment, institutional support, and the involvement of local actors, while inhibiting factors include geographical conditions, limited data, and logistical distribution challenges. These findings emphasize that the success of the MBG Program in Karangasem Regency is strongly determined by the quality of collaborative governance that is inclusive, adaptive, and oriented toward program sustainability.

Keywords: Collaborative Governance, Free Nutritious Meal Program, Cross-Sector Coordination, Facilitative Leadership

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received
February 13, 2026
Revised
April 03, 2026
Accepted
April 28, 2026

Published by
ISSN

CV. Creative Tugu Pena
2774-7077

Website

<https://www.attractivejournal.com/index.php/bce/>

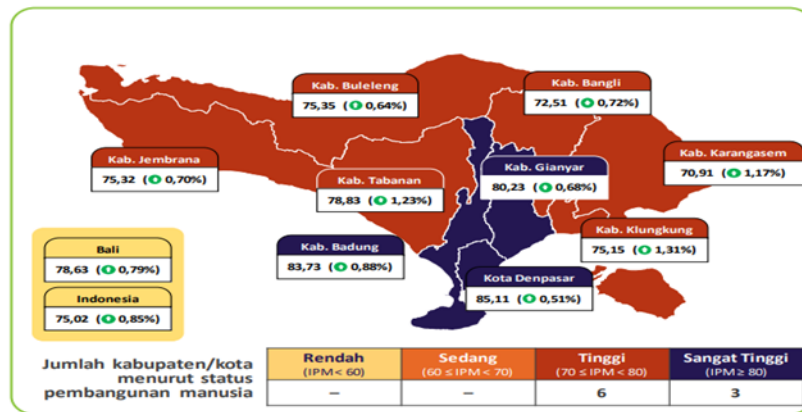
This is an open access article under the CC BY SA license

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>



INTRODUCTION

The Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG), mandated under Presidential Regulation Number 115 of 2025, represents the government's effort to improve the quality of the nation's future generation through the fulfillment of nutrition needs in an integrated national framework. Ideally, this strategic policy requires seamless synergy among government institutions, the private sector, and the community through a transparent, accountable, and consensus-oriented collaborative platform to ensure accurate targeting and high nutritional standards. However, realities at the regional level indicate a disconnection between central government policy and cross-sectoral execution capacity in the field, where program implementation is often trapped in a traditional managerial model that remains rigid and hierarchical, thereby hindering the flexibility of inter-agency coordination.



Indeks Pembangunan Manusia (IPM) dan Status Pembangunan Manusia Menurut Kabupaten/Kota di Bali, 2024

This phenomenon gap is increasingly evident in Karangasem Regency, where rural geographical challenges and a persistent poverty rate of 27.32% in 2025 create significant structural barriers to the effectiveness of MBG distribution. The main problem arises when public authorities at the regional level face difficulties in orchestrating the involvement of non-state actors, such as foundations managing service units and local farmer groups, into a coherent institutional design. Referring to the framework of Ansell and Gash (2008), successful collaboration requires a balance of power and incentives for all stakeholders to participate actively in decision-making. If this is not managed through strong facilitative leadership, it risks triggering chronic coordination inefficiency within the SPPG MBG (Nutrition Fulfillment Service Unit in the Free Nutritious Meal Program).

Previous studies conducted by Suprpto et al. (2025) and Lendra (2025) have made important contributions to portraying MBG policy from the perspectives of national governance and good governance principles. Nevertheless, the limitation of these studies lies in their predominantly macro-level focus, as they have not deeply examined the micro-level dynamics of collaboration in regions with high economic vulnerability. This leaves a research gap regarding how the collaborative cycle, particularly in building trust and shared understanding, can emerge amid limited regional resources. This study seeks to address that gap by focusing its analysis on the collaborative governance process as a key instrument for bridging the interests of the bureaucracy, the private sector, and local communities within a synergistic operational framework.

The urgency of this study lies in the pressing need to formulate a cross-sectoral coordination model that must adapt rapidly to support the sustainability of national strategic programs in rural areas facing extreme socio-geographical challenges. By evaluating the collaboration process through the contingency model of Ansell and Gash (2008), this study aims to identify the driving and inhibiting factors that determine the successful implementation of MBG in Karangasem Regency. Practically, this study is expected to provide strategic recommendations for local governments in strengthening inclusive public-private partnership governance. Academically, it contributes to enriching the Public Administration literature on collaborative mechanisms for addressing potential failures in public policy implementation in order to create sustainable public value.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive-interpretative qualitative approach to understand the dynamics of collaborative governance in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) in Karangasem Regency. This approach was selected because it enables an in-depth exploration of coordination processes, role distribution, relationships among actors, as well as the barriers and opportunities for cross-sector collaboration in program implementation. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with informants selected purposively from local government elements, program implementers, and parties involved in the provision and distribution of local food. In addition, this study also used field observation and documentation to strengthen the empirical findings. Secondary data were derived from official documents, regulations, program reports, and relevant scientific literature. Data analysis was conducted

through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification on an ongoing basis in order to obtain a comprehensive and accountable picture. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and cross-checking information among documents, so that the research findings are more credible and aligned with the field context.

RESULT

Based on the results of data grouping from interviews, observations, and documentation, the researcher identified several recurring patterns of meaning related to the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) in Karangasem Regency. The raw data, which were initially dispersed across various informant statements, were then summarized into initial codes that reflected the experiences, perspectives, and practices of the actors involved in the program. These codes were subsequently organized into broader categories so that the relationships among themes could be seen more systematically and analyzed more easily.

Through this process, the researcher not only identified what the informants stated, but also interpreted the meanings behind their statements, particularly those related to the initial conditions of collaboration, institutional design, facilitative leadership, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors of cross-sector cooperation. To make the analysis easier to understand, the research findings are then presented in the form of an integrated table that sequentially includes the stages of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The following table shows how detailed and diverse data are condensed into core themes that represent the dynamics of collaborative governance in the implementation of MBG in Karangasem Regency.

Table 1. Results of the Combined Coding Categorization

Open Coding	Axial Coding	Selective Coding
cross-sector coordination, regular meetings, interagency communication, joint forums	patterns of coordination among actors	cross-sector collaboration in the implementation of MBG
dominance of certain actors, centralized authority, top-down decisions, imbalance of roles	imbalance of power and resources	initial conditions affecting the quality of collaboration
regulatory support, policy mandates, institutional obligations, program instructions	formal participation incentives	driving factors for actor involvement
new relationships among actors, lack of a strong history of cooperation, initial adaptation	weak history of cooperation	early characteristics of collaborative relationships
role of local government, education office, health office, foundations, schools, farmers	division of actor roles	actor structure in MBG governance
implementation rules, SOPs, technical guidelines, distribution mechanisms, task division	formal institutional design	institutional framework of the MBG program
information transparency, data openness, activity reporting, access to information	institutional openness	prerequisite for building trust
open forums, deliberation, discussions, face-to-face meetings, shared perception building	deliberative communication	mechanism for building shared understanding
trust among actors, consistency of implementation, shared commitment, mutual trust	trust building	strengthening the sustainability of collaboration
understanding of program objectives, shared vision, student nutrition targets,	shared understanding	common orientation in the MBG program

Open Coding	Axial Coding	Selective Coding
mutual understanding of roles		
regional leadership, facilitation of dialogue, mediation of interests, liaison among actors	facilitative leadership	important factor driving collaboration
geographical constraints, difficult distribution, road access, remote areas, limited infrastructure	operational and structural barriers	challenges to program sustainability
community support, local participation, farmer involvement, foundation assistance	participation of local actors	supporting factors for program implementation
positive preliminary results, food distributed, students assisted, program running	initial achievements of collaboration	early outcomes of collaborative governance

The open coding stage shows that your research data is very rich in terms that describe the process of collaboration among actors in the implementation of MBG. From various keywords such as coordination, joint forums, regular meetings, and inter-agency communication, it appears that communication is the core element in the implementation of the program. This indicates that the implementation of MBG in Karangasem is not carried out independently by a single institution, but through working relationships involving many parties. In practice, communication is not merely an exchange of information, but also a means of aligning actions, resolving technical issues, and ensuring that the program distribution continues to run in accordance with its objectives.

In addition, codes such as the dominance of certain actors, centralized authority, and top-down decision-making also emerged. These codes indicate that, in the early stage of collaboration, there were still imbalances in the relationships among actors. Some parties held stronger positions because they possessed policy-making authority, while other actors were mostly positioned as implementers. This condition is important to note because it can affect the quality of participation. If one party becomes too dominant, collaboration may merely turn into the execution of instructions rather than a joint decision-making process. In the context of collaborative governance, this situation represents a challenge that must be addressed through a more inclusive institutional design.

Another prominent code is regulatory support, policy mandates, and institutional obligations. This indicates that actors' participation in the MBG program does not arise solely from voluntary awareness, but also from formal encouragement in the form of regulations and institutional responsibilities. In other words, the existence of national policy provides legitimacy for the involvement of each party. At the same time, however, such regulatory support does not necessarily generate substantive commitment automatically. Therefore, the presence of regulation must be accompanied by dialogue and the development of shared understanding so that collaboration does not stop at administrative formality.

At the axial coding stage, the various open codes that have been identified begin to be grouped into broader categories. For example, codes such as cross-sector coordination, regular meetings, and interagency communication are grouped into the category of coordination patterns among actors. This category shows that the success of the MBG program greatly depends on how effectively the actors communicate and work together. In a public program involving many institutions, coordination is not merely a technical necessity, but a fundamental foundation to ensure that policies can be implemented uniformly and without overlap.

Codes such as the dominance of certain actors, centralized authority, and unequal roles then form the category of power and resource imbalance. This category is very important because it explains one of the initial conditions in collaborative governance. In Ansell and Gash's theory, collaboration can only develop properly when there is a sufficiently balanced space for actors to participate. When resources and authority are concentrated in certain parties, other actors tend to become passive and merely follow decisions that have already been made. This is where efforts to build a more equal forum become important so that all interests can be heard.

Furthermore, codes such as implementation rules, standard operating procedures (SOPs), technical guidelines, and task distribution fall into the category of formal institutional design. This category explains that MBG collaboration in Karangasem has a fairly clear administrative work foundation. However, the existence of formal rules alone is not sufficient. What is more important is how these rules are translated into practices that are transparent, flexible, and understood by all parties. If the rules are too rigid or are only known by certain actors, the potential for information asymmetry will remain high, and trust among parties will be difficult to develop.

Another prominent category is trust building and shared understanding. Both indicate that, in the process of collaborative governance, trust and mutual understanding are outcomes that must be built gradually. Trust does not emerge from a single meeting, but through the experience of working together, consistency of action, and openness of information. Meanwhile, shared understanding is formed when all actors have the same perspective on the program's objectives, implementation standards, and their respective roles. In MBG, this is important because the program does not only target food distribution, but also the improvement of nutritional quality and support for students' growth and development.

At the selective coding stage, all the categories that have been formed are centered on the core theme, namely collaborative governance as the main mechanism for maintaining the success and sustainability of the MBG Program in Karangasem Regency. This core theme shows that the implementation of MBG cannot be understood merely as a food assistance program, but rather as a governance process that requires synergy, role distribution, trust, and leadership capable of bridging multiple interests.

From this, it can be seen that the initial conditions of collaboration serve as a highly determining foundation. If, from the beginning, there are role imbalances, dominance by certain actors, or low levels of trust, then the collaborative process will proceed more slowly and require many adjustments. Conversely, if the actors are willing to share roles and respect each other's authority, collaboration can develop in a healthier manner. In the context of Karangasem, the existence of national regulations does provide clear direction, but success in the field is still strongly influenced by the extent to which local actors are able to interpret the policy contextually according to regional conditions.

The core theme also emphasizes the importance of facilitative leadership. Leadership in this program is not merely about giving instructions, but about how a leader is able to open spaces for dialogue, mediate differences in perspectives, and ensure that all parties feel involved. This role is very important because cross-sector collaboration often involves differences in interests, working styles, and institutional capacities. Without leadership that can facilitate communication, collaboration can easily turn into a dry and unproductive administrative relationship.

In addition, selective coding also shows that program sustainability depends on supporting factors such as the participation of local actors, community involvement, and the presence of positive early achievements. However, obstacles such as geographical conditions, distribution access, and information inequality remain serious challenges. Therefore, the main theme of this study can be formulated as follows: the success of the MBG Program in Karangasem Regency is determined by the quality of collaborative governance built through relatively balanced initial conditions, transparent institutional design, strong facilitative leadership, and a shared commitment to maintaining the program's objectives in the long term.

1. The cross-sector collaborative governance process in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) in Karangasem Regency, viewed from the aspects of starting conditions and institutional design

The analysis focuses on how the actors involved interpret the initial collaboration process and how the rules of the game are formed in the implementation of the MBG Program in Karangasem Regency. At this stage, the researcher traces the most frequently occurring words from the data processing results to identify prominent patterns of meaning related to the initial conditions of collaboration, role distribution, institutional structure, and coordination patterns among actors. The following word cloud presents the dominant terms that reflect field realities and serve as the basis for understanding the dynamics of collaborative governance in the early stage of program implementation.



Figure 1. The cross-sector collaborative governance process in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG)

Based on the first word cloud, it can be seen that dominant words such as starting conditions, conditions, design, institutional, cross-sectoral, coordination, sector, BGN, Disdik, poverty, access, infrastructure, forum, and regulation indicate that the collaborative governance process in the implementation of the MBG program in Karangasem Regency is strongly influenced by initial conditions that are not yet fully equal. The dominance of the terms conditions and starting suggests that the actors view the initial stage of collaboration as an important foundation that determines the direction of subsequent cooperation. In the context of Karangasem, this foundation is shaped by the region's need for nutritional intervention, limited access to services, and the demand to unite various sectors toward a shared goal.

The emergence of the words poverty and access shows that the MBG program did not emerge in a neutral space, but rather as a response to real socio-economic problems. Geographical conditions and unequal access to food are the reasons why cross-sectoral collaboration is needed. Meanwhile, the words BGN, Disdik, and forum indicate that the collaboration structure is still strongly influenced by formal institutions and top-down coordination channels. This suggests that the institutional design of the program still positions certain institutions as the main directing actors, while other actors are mostly placed in the role of technical implementers.

The words institutional, design, regulation, and coordination emphasize that the success of collaboration depends heavily on clear rules of the game, firm task division, and the ability of actors to adapt national policies to local needs. However, the emergence of the words shortage, difficult, and imbalance also indicates that there are still resource disparities and operational challenges that need to be addressed. Therefore, the results of this word cloud confirm that MBG collaboration in Karangasem already has a strong formal foundation, but still requires strengthening in terms of role equality, institutional adaptation, and the opening of broader participatory spaces so that collaboration can truly operate in a substantive manner.

2. The Role of Facilitative Leadership in Building Trust and Shared Understanding Among Stakeholders in the Implementation of the MBG Program

Attention is directed toward how leadership works to keep collaboration running harmoniously. In collaborative governance, leadership does not only function as a controller but also as a facilitator who bridges differences in perspectives, builds mutual trust, and creates a shared understanding among actors. Therefore, the following word cloud is used to identify the most frequently occurring terms related to the role of leadership, interactions among actors, dialogue processes, and the formation of trust in the implementation of MBG in Karangasem Regency.



Figure 2. The Role of Facilitative Leadership in Building Trust and Shared Understanding

The second word cloud shows the dominance of the words facilitative, trust, leadership, shared, build, dialogue, meeting, health office, menu, and target. This word arrangement emphasizes that leadership in the implementation of the MBG program in Karangasem is not understood merely as structural command, but rather as an effort to direct, assist, and facilitate joint working processes among stakeholders. The word facilitative, which appears most prominently, indicates that leaders are strongly expected to create an open and flexible communication space that allows each party to express their views or the challenges they face in the field.

The appearance of the words trust and shared indicates that trust and mutual understanding are essential elements in maintaining the continuity of collaboration. In the implementation of the MBG program, trust is built not only through formal relationships, but also through consistency of action, openness of information, and the leader's ability to respond to problems fairly. Meanwhile, the words dialogue and meeting show that communication processes serve as the main means of aligning perceptions. Through these forums, actors can discuss technical implementation, adjust menus, evaluate distribution, and seek solutions to emerging obstacles.

The words health office, target, and menu show that facilitative leadership also plays a role in connecting technical policies with real needs in the field. The health office, for example, plays a role in ensuring that nutritional aspects and food safety remain priorities, while other actors adjust program implementation to the conditions of schools and students. This shows that effective leadership is not leadership that dominates, but leadership that is able to weave together various interests so that program objectives remain aligned.

Overall, this word cloud illustrates that facilitative leadership in Karangasem Regency plays an important role in building a collaborative atmosphere based on trust, communication, and shared understanding. However, it is still evident that this process needs to be continuously strengthened so that it does not stop at routine coordination, but develops into deeper and more sustainable cooperation.

3. Driving and Inhibiting Factors in Achieving Cross-Sector Collaborative Agreements to Ensure the Sustainability of the MBG Program in Karangasem Regency

At this stage, the researcher examines the most frequently occurring words to identify whether collaboration is mainly driven by shared goals, support from local actors, and good leadership, or whether it is hindered by coordination issues, geographical conditions, and limited resources. The following word cloud illustrates this overview and serves as a basis for assessing the extent to which the sustainability of the MBG program can be maintained through effective collaboration.

monitoring
 income data
 supply **commitment**
 together **funds** access
funds grant easy
 land **center**
 supervision

Figure 3. Driving Factors in Achieving Cross-Sector Collaborative Agreements to Ensure the Sustainability of the MBG Program in Karangasem Regency

transport
 infrastructure traffic
 routine sustainable adapted
 jangka kitchen poverty logistics
 supply pears **via** sustain contract
 need **agreement** grant
 lack need lack long-term contract
 long-term contract geographic
 remain **collaboratif** fluctuating
 mountains slope
 overcrowding

Figure 4. Inhibiting Factors in Achieving Cross-Sector Collaborative Agreements to Ensure the Sustainability of the MBG Program in Karangasem Regency

The third word cloud shows dominant words such as bangun (build), trust, facilitative, leadership, shared, government, health office, meeting, dialogue, farmers, foundation, data, seasonal, stunting, and students. The dominance of these words indicates that the main driving factor in achieving collaborative agreement is the existence of a shared goal to improve students' nutrition and reduce the risk of stunting. The words stunting and students show that the MBG program is understood as a social intervention that addresses the basic needs of the community, thereby encouraging actors to move in the same policy direction.

The words government, health office, foundation, and farmers indicate that the success of collaboration is strongly determined by the involvement of various parties that complement one another. The government plays a role in providing direction and legitimacy, the health office ensures nutritional quality, the foundation manages operations, while farmers are an important part of the supply chain. The involvement of local actors such as farmers becomes a supporting factor because it strengthens a sense of ownership toward the program while also opening opportunities for community economic empowerment. Therefore, collaborative agreement is more easily formed when all parties feel that the program provides direct benefits for them.

On the other hand, the emergence of the words seasonal and data indicates real obstacles in program implementation. The seasonal factor illustrates that food availability is strongly influenced by natural conditions and production cycles, which can affect supply continuity. Meanwhile, the word data indicates that information accuracy remains an important challenge in the decision-making process. If data on targets, distribution, and nutritional needs are not well organized, collaboration will be difficult to run efficiently. This shows that program sustainability does not only depend on the good intentions of the actors, but also on the readiness of supporting systems that can ensure smooth coordination and implementation in the field.

The words trust, facilitative, meeting, and dialogue again emphasize that trust and communication are the main requirements for maintaining collaborative agreement. Without trust, every technical obstacle can easily develop into tension among actors. Conversely, when communication runs well and there is a leader who can facilitate problem-solving, collaboration is easier to sustain. Thus, the results of this word cloud show that the driving factors of collaborative agreement lie in shared goals, local actor support, and adequate leadership, while the inhibiting factors arise from seasonal conditions, data limitations, and cross-sector coordination challenges that are not yet fully stable.

DISCUSSION SECTION : MAIN FINDING

The main findings of this study show that the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) in Karangasem Regency takes place through a pattern of collaborative governance built upon shared needs, although it is still influenced by resource inequality, differences in actor capacity, and institutional coordination that has not yet become fully equal. In the initial stage, collaboration was formed not only because of collective awareness, but also because of national policy pressure requiring cross-sectoral involvement in addressing child nutrition problems and social vulnerability in the region. This condition confirms that the success of collaboration is not determined solely by the existence of a program, but also by the ability of actors to share roles, agree on common goals, and adjust working mechanisms to the local context. In this regard, the findings of this study strengthen the view that starting conditions serve as an important foundation for successful collaboration, especially when there are inequalities in authority and resources among actors (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Imanda & Ulfah, 2025).

The next finding shows that institutional design plays a central role in determining the quality of collaboration. In the implementation of MBG in Karangasem, rules of the game, task distribution, and formal coordination flows provide clarity regarding who does what. At the same time, however, they also reveal the limited space for substantive participation by local actors. This indicates that an overly centralized institutional design has the potential to produce collaboration that is more administrative than deliberative. In other words, the program is running, but it has not fully optimized equal participation from all stakeholders. This finding is in line with previous studies showing that the success of collaborative governance is strongly influenced by forum inclusiveness, internal transparency, and clarity of rules that are not only formal but also operational in the field (Imanda & Ulfah, 2025; Imada et al., 2024).

The role of facilitative leadership is another important finding in this study. The leadership needed in MBG implementation is not leadership that merely gives instructions, but leadership that is able to create spaces for dialogue, bridge interests among actors, and maintain trust so that cooperation can be sustained. In Karangasem Regency, this type of leadership can be seen in efforts to unify perceptions among agencies, resolve technical problems through deliberation, and maintain continuous communication among government actors, foundations, schools, and local food providers. This finding confirms that trust building and shared understanding do not emerge automatically, but are the result of consistent communication processes and leadership capable of reducing tensions between interests. This is in line with studies that position facilitative leadership as the main driver in maintaining the sustainability of cross-sectoral collaboration (Imanda & Ulfah, 2025; Basyar & Puspaningtyas, 2022).

The main driving factor in achieving collaborative agreement is the shared goal of improving children's nutritional status and expanding the social benefits of the program for local communities. The involvement of government agencies, foundations, farmers, schools, and local government elements shows that the MBG program is understood not only as a food intervention, but also as an instrument of regional social and economic development. At the same time, the involvement of

farmers and local providers strengthens a sense of ownership of the program because it creates real opportunities for economic participation. This finding supports previous research showing that cross-sectoral collaboration is easier to establish when each actor sees mutual benefits, rather than merely administrative obligations (Ibrahim, Leus, & Dewi, 2024; Imada et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, this study also finds significant obstacles in maintaining the sustainability of collaborative agreements. These obstacles are mainly related to geographical conditions, data availability, logistics distribution, and dependence on inter-institutional coordination that must be continuously maintained. In the context of Karangasem, territorial and access factors pose specific challenges because they affect distribution accuracy, supply continuity, and program implementation stability. In addition, if data are not properly managed, collaborative decisions risk not being based on accurate information. This finding is consistent with studies emphasizing that collaborative governance requires data support, institutional adaptation, and agile coordination mechanisms so that programs remain effective at the implementation level (Suprpto et al., 2025; Imanda & Ulfah, 2025).

Overall, the main findings of this study indicate that the successful implementation of MBG in Karangasem Regency is strongly determined by the balance among starting conditions, institutional design, facilitative leadership, and continuously developed collaborative processes. Collaborative governance cannot be understood merely as formal cooperation among institutions, but rather as a social and institutional process that requires trust, communication, and strong shared understanding. When these four elements run in balance, the program has the potential to be sustainable. Conversely, when one element is weak, collaboration can easily shift into a less participatory hierarchical relationship. This finding enriches the literature on collaborative governance in the implementation of public programs, particularly national policies carried out in areas with complex geographical and social challenges (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Imada et al., 2024; Suprpto et al., 2025).

NOVELTY

This study offers novelty at two main levels. First, empirically, this study examines the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) in Karangasem Regency as a form of collaborative governance taking place in a region characterized by geographical challenges, limited access, and socio-economic vulnerability. Unlike previous studies that generally highlight the MBG program at the national policy level or in more urban locations, this study positions Karangasem Regency as an analytical setting that demonstrates how cross-sector collaboration is developed in an area with complex socio-geographical characteristics. Thus, this study broadens the understanding that the success of nutrition programs is not only determined by central policy design, but also by the ability of local actors to adapt such policies through coordination, institutional adjustment, and facilitative leadership. This finding is in line with the study by Suprpto et al. (2025), which emphasizes the importance of data integration and outcome tracking in MBG implementation; however, this study goes further by emphasizing the dynamics of collaboration at a more contextual and operational regional level (Suprpto et al., 2025).

Second, conceptually, this study enriches the literature on collaborative governance by showing that the success of collaboration in the MBG program is strongly determined by the interconnection between starting conditions, institutional design, facilitative leadership, and shared understanding. Unlike studies that assess program success only in terms of food distribution outputs or administrative achievements, this study places the collaborative process as the main focus of analysis. In other words, the novelty of this study lies in its approach to interpreting MBG implementation not merely as a food assistance program, but as an arena of cross-sector governance that requires equality of roles, trust, and consistent communication mechanisms. This approach expands the findings of Lendra et al. (2025), which highlight the relevance of MBG to the principles of good governance, by providing a deeper analysis of inter-actor interactions and institutional structures that shape the quality of collaboration (Lendra et al., 2025).

In addition, this study also presents methodological novelty through the use of thematic analysis based on word clouds, open coding, axial coding, and selective coding to examine the dynamics of cross-sector collaboration in a gradual and systematic manner. This approach enables the researcher to identify dominant word patterns, classify meanings, and formulate core themes that more reflectively represent the experiences of actors in the field. This novelty is important because most previous studies tend to be generally descriptive or focus on the administrative

evaluation of program implementation. In this context, this study makes a new contribution to public administration studies by showing that in-depth qualitative analysis can reveal how trust, coordination, and facilitative leadership mutually shape program sustainability. This intersects with the study by Imanda and Ulfah (2025), which examines the dynamics of MBG collaboration in Malang City; however, this study adds the contextual dimension of Karangasem, which more prominently highlights geographical challenges and local adaptation (Imanda & Ulfah, 2025).

Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on collaborative governance by affirming that unequal starting conditions are not always an absolute obstacle, but can serve as an initial point for the formation of collaboration when supported by clear institutional design and leadership capable of facilitating dialogue. Thus, the novelty of this study lies not only in its object of inquiry, but also in its argument that the sustainability of the MBG program in rural areas is strongly influenced by the ability of local actors to build shared understanding amid resource limitations. This finding reinforces the studies of Ibrahim et al. (2024) and Basyar and Puspaningtyas (2022), which show that cross-sector collaboration is effective in addressing social issues; however, this study offers a new interpretation that such effectiveness greatly depends on local context, leadership style, and the quality of collaborative governance developed gradually (Ibrahim et al., 2024; Basyar & Puspaningtyas, 2022).

Contributions, Limitations, and Recommendations

This study makes an important contribution to public administration studies, particularly in broadening the understanding of collaborative governance in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) in regions with distinctive geographical and socio-economic challenges. Empirically, this study shows that program success depends not only on central government policy, but also on the ability of local actors to build coordination, trust, and shared understanding through adaptive institutional design. Theoretically, this study strengthens the relevance of the Ansell and Gash model in examining cross-sectoral collaboration dynamics at the regional level, while also showing that facilitative leadership and the initial conditions of collaboration play a decisive role in maintaining program sustainability. These findings also provide practical contributions for local governments, implementing foundations, and local stakeholders in designing more inclusive, transparent, and responsive cooperation patterns that address field needs.

Although this study produces meaningful findings, several limitations need to be considered. First, this study focuses on only one location, namely Karangasem Regency, so the results may not be directly generalizable to other regions with different social, economic, and institutional characteristics. Second, the data used are mostly qualitative and depend on informants' perceptions, so subjective bias in interpretation remains possible. Third, this study has not yet deeply measured the long-term impact of the MBG program on changes in nutritional status, funding sustainability, or institutional effectiveness quantitatively. Therefore, the results of this study are more appropriately understood as a description of the processes and dynamics of collaboration in the early stage of program implementation.

Based on these findings and limitations, this study recommends that local governments strengthen routine, open, and participatory cross-sectoral coordination forums so that all actors have equal space in decision-making. In addition, the role of facilitative leadership needs to be strengthened so that the collaboration process does not stop at formal communication, but develops into cooperation based on trust and shared goals. From an institutional perspective, mechanisms for task distribution, distribution flows, and reporting systems need to be made more transparent and well documented to reduce coordination barriers. For future research, studies are recommended to use a mixed-methods approach or comparative studies across several regions in order to examine differences in collaboration patterns, success factors, and the impacts of the MBG program more broadly and deeply.

Recommendations for Future Researchers (Condensed)

Future research is recommended to expand the study of the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) by using more diverse research locations, so that the characteristics of cross-sector collaboration in regions with different social, economic, and geographical conditions can be compared. In addition, future studies should combine qualitative and quantitative approaches in order not only to understand the collaboration process, but also to

measure the program's impact more objectively, particularly in relation to institutional effectiveness, funding sustainability, and changes in the nutritional status of beneficiaries. Future research may also further explore the role of local leadership, information transparency, and the participation of non-government actors in maintaining the consistency of cooperation, so that the findings can provide a more comprehensive picture for the development of MBG policy in the future.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) in Karangasem Regency takes place through a collaborative governance process influenced by the initial conditions of collaboration, institutional design, facilitative leadership, and the dynamics of trust and mutual understanding among stakeholders. Regarding the first research question, the cross-sectoral collaboration process appears to be built upon a shared need to address child nutrition problems, poverty, and limited access. However, it is still marked by resource disparities, role distribution that is not yet fully equal, and the need for a more inclusive institutional design that is adaptive to local conditions. Regarding the second research question, facilitative leadership has proven to play an important role in building trust and shared understanding through dialogue, coordination meetings, and role adjustments among actors, allowing collaboration to run more harmoniously and purposefully. Meanwhile, regarding the third research question, the main driving factors behind the success of collaborative agreements are shared goals, cross-sectoral commitment, and the involvement of local actors, while the inhibiting factors include geographical conditions, limited data, distribution challenges, and coordination that is not yet fully stable. Overall, this study emphasizes that the sustainability of the MBG Program in Karangasem Regency is strongly determined by the quality of collaborative governance that is able to unite the interests of various actors within a transparent, participatory, and long-term results-oriented cooperation framework.

REFERENCES

- Ananda Liony Putra, & Jamil. (2022). Kedudukan DPRD Sebagai Unsur Penyelenggara Pemerintah Daerah Dalam Sistem Negara Republik Indonesia. *Jurnal Judiacy*, 11(2), 94.
- Antari, P. E. Ansell, C., & Gash, A. (2008). Collaborative governance in theory and practice. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 18(4), 543–571. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mum032>
- Astuti, R. S., Warsono, H., & Rachim, A. (2020). *Collaborative governance dalam perspektif administrasi publik*.
- Azizah, B. O. P., Soedarto, T., & Parsudi, S. (2022). Pemanfaatan lahan pekarangan dan peran kelompok wanita tani melalui program pekarangan pangan lestari di Kota Malang. *Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Agroinfo Galuh*, 9(3), 956–970. <http://dx.doi.org/10.25157/jimag.v9i3.7905>
- Badan Gizi Nasional. (2025). *Petunjuk teknis tata kelola keuangan satuan pelayanan pemenuhan gizi (SPPG)*. Badan Gizi Nasional.
- Badan Gizi Nasional. (2025). *Pedoman sertifikasi keamanan pangan dan pemilihan mitra yayasan dalam program Makan Bergizi Gratis*. Badan Gizi Nasional.
- Badan Ketahanan Pangan Kementerian Pertanian. (2021). *Petunjuk teknis bantuan pemerintah kegiatan Pekarangan Pangan Lestari (P2L) tahun 2021*.
- Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Karangasem. (2025). *Statistik daerah Kabupaten Karangasem 2025*.
- Bovaird, T. (2004). Public-private partnerships: From contested concepts to prevalent practice. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 70(2), 199–215.
- Brinkerhoff, D. W., & Brinkerhoff, J. M. (2011). Public-private partnerships: Perspectives on purposes, publicness, and good governance. *Public Administration and Development*, 31(1), 2–14.
- Emerson, K., Nabatchi, T., & Balogh, S. (2012). An integrative framework for collaborative governance. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 22(1), 1–29.
- Florini, A., & Pauli, M. (2018). Collaborative governance for the sustainable development goals. *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies*, 5(3), 583–598.
- Hidayat, S. S., Tri Lestari, E. W., & Nurliawati, N. (2024). Model tata kelola kolaboratif (*collaborative*

- governance*) dalam program lahan pertanian pangan berkelanjutan di Kota Sukabumi. *Mimbar Jurnal Penelitian Sosial dan Politik*, 13(3), 269–286.
- Klijn, E. H., & Koppenjan, J. F. (2016). *Governance networks in the public sector*. Routledge.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Pemerintah Republik Indonesia. (2025). *Peraturan Presiden Nomor 115 Tahun 2025 tentang Tata Kelola Penyelenggaraan Program Makan Bergizi Gratis*. Sekretariat Negara.
- Purnomo, E. P., dkk. (2025). *Dynamic governance dalam implementasi kebijakan Makan Bergizi Gratis di Indonesia*. *Jurnal Kebijakan Administrasi Publik (JKAP)*, 29(1).
- Rhodes, R. A. W. (2017). *Network governance and the differentiated polity*. Oxford University Press.
- Sartika, I. (2024). Collaborative governance dalam perencanaan pembangunan di Kabupaten Bekasi Provinsi Jawa Barat. *Jurnal Ilmiah Administrasi Pemerintahan Daerah*, 14(2), 209–233. <https://doi.org/10.33701/jiapd.v14i2>
- Sugiyana, L. U. T., Hariyono, W., & Handayani, L. (2024). Pengurangan risiko bencana berbasis komunitas untuk meningkatkan ketahanan wilayah: Studi tinjauan pustaka. *Jurnal Formil Forum Ilmiah Kesmas Respati*, 9(2), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.35842/formil.v9i2.547>
- Sugiyono. (2017). *Metode penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.
- Thomson, A. M., & Perry, J. L. (2006). Collaboration processes: Inside the black box. *Public Administration Review*, 66(s1), 20–32.
- UNICEF Indonesia. (2024). *Review of school-based food programs in Southeast Asia: Lessons for Indonesia*. UNICEF.
- Van Waarden, F. (1992). Dimensions and types of policy networks. *European Journal of Political Research*, 21(1–2), 29–52.
- Winarno, B. (2014). *Kebijakan publik: Teori, proses, dan studi kasus* (Edisi revisi). CAPS.
- World Bank. (2024). *School meals, social protection and human development: A global review*. World Bank Publications.
- Xinhua. (2024). FAO: Sekitar 282 juta orang alami kerawanan pangan akut pada 2023. *ANTARA*.
- D. (2020). Implementasi Fungsi Pengawasan Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Dalam Upaya Memperkuat Sistem Presidensial Di Indonesia. *Refleksi Hukum: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum*, 4(2), 217–238. <https://doi.org/10.24246/jrh.2020.v4.i2.p217-238>
- Asmizar, M., Purwanti, D., Fajar, Y., & Yana, F. (2020). Manajemen Fungsi Legislasi Managing the Legislation Function of the Regional People ' S Representative House. *Governansi*, 6(2), 121–132.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2018). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Downs, A. (1957). *An economic theory of democracy*. Harper & Row.
- Eviani, Risnai, M., & Khair Abdul. (2024). Peran Dewan Perwakilan rakyat Daerah Barat, menjalankan Fungsi Pengawasan Di Provinsi nusa tenggara. *Jurnal Diskresi*, 3(2), 146–150.
- Faisol, & Anadi, Y. R. (2022). FUNGSI PENGAWASAN DEWAN PERWAKILAN DAERAH (DPRD) SEBAGAI KONTROL TERHADAP PENGELOLAAN KEUANGAN PEMERINTAH DAERAH. *Jurnal Hukum Dan Kenotariatan*, 6(4), 1555–1566.
- Huberman, A. M., & Miles, M. B. (1994). *Data management and analysis methods*. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 428-444). Sage Publications.
- Kansil, J. (2020). *Proses legislasi daerah: Antara politik dan administrasi*. *Jurnal Pembentukan Perundang-undangan*, 7(2), 89-112.
- Kementerian Dalam Negeri Republik Indonesia. (2025). *Laporan kinerja legislasi DPRD kabupaten/kota tahun 2024*. Direktorat Jenderal Otonomi Daerah.
- Makalikis, D. C., Ilat, V., & Pusung, R. J. (2022). Penerapan Prinsip Good Governance Dalam Pengelolaan Keuangan Di Sekretariat DPRD Manado. *Jurnal LPPM Bidang EkoSosBudKum (Ekonomi, Sosial, Budaya, Dan Hukum)*, 5(2), 285–292.
- Malik, F., Wahid, A., & Fitriana, D. (2022). Fungsi Legislasi Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah (Dprd) Dalam Pembentukan Peraturan Daerah (Perda). *Jurnal De Jure Muhammadiyah Cirebon*, 4(1), 67–76. <https://doi.org/10.32534/djmc.v4i1.3051>
- Ratnasari, Risnain, & Fallahiyah. (2024). *Implementasi fungsi pengawasan DPRD NTB dalam mewujudkan good governance*. *Jurnal Pemerintahan Lokal*, 12(2), 123-145.

- Rhodes, R. A. W. (1996). The new governance: Governing without government. *Political Studies*, 44(4), 652-667.
- Saprudin, Ibrahim, M. A., Ahmad, B., & Yunus, M. (2022). Performance of the Provincial House of Representatives in Carrying out Legislative Functions in Southeast Sulawesi Province. *Journal of Asian Multicultural Research for Social Sciences Study*, 3(4), 43-50.
- Suargita, N., Adnyana, Y., Luh, N., & Suastini, P. (2023). Pendalaman Tugas Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah. *Jurnal Ilmu Administrasi*, 14, 100-114.
- Susriana, I. M. (2021). Implementasi Kebijakan Tentang Hak Keuangan Dan Administratif Pimpinan Dan Anggota Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah Dalam Rangka Meningkatkan Kinerja Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah Kabupaten Badung. *Jurnal Widya Publika*, 9(2), 171-180.
- Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 23 Tahun 2014 tentang Pemerintahan Daerah (Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 23/2014 on Regional Governance).
- Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2011 tentang Pembentukan Peraturan Perundang-undangan (Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 12/2011 on Formation of Legislation).
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (1997). *Governance for sustainable human development*. UNDP Policy Document.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2021). *Good governance and sustainable development: 25 years of experience*. UNDP Global Report.
- Wardana Prastyo. (2022). *Komunikasi representasional DPRD dan sensitivitas kebijakan*. *Jurnal Komunikasi Politik*, 6(1), 45-67.
- Widhiasthini, N. W. (2020). Praktek Disrupsi Kampanye Pilkada 2020 dan Potensi Pelanggaran Kode Etik. <https://Journal.Dkpp.Go.Id/Index.Php/Etikapemilu/Article/View/23/21>, September.
- Widhiasthini, N. W., Subawa, N. S., Sedana, N., & Permatasari, N. P. I. (2019). *Analisis Faktor-Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Partisipasi Masyarakat Dalam Pilkada Bali pemilu . Penelitian ini menggunakan metode Komisi Pemilihan Umum di Kota*. 8(1), 1-11.
- Wijaya Saputra, D., & Sofian Hadi, M. (2022). Persepsi Guru Sekolah Dasar Jakarta Utara Dan Kepulauan Seribu Tentang Kurikulum Merdeka. *Jurnal Holistika*, 6(1), 28-33. <https://Jurnal.Umj.Ac.Id/Index.Php/Hol Istika/Article/View/13216>.
- World Bank. (1992). *Governance and development*. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper.
- Yudiata, K. W., Adnyana, Y., Kartika, I. M., & Adi, I. M. (2025). *Optimalisasi Fungsi Pengawasan DPRD Kabupaten Badung Dalam Realisasi Rencana Kota Mangupura Melalui Penyelenggaraan Bimbingan Teknis Optimization of the Supervisory Function of the Badung Regency People ' s Representative Council in the Realization of the*. 1(April), 1-16.