



Strengthening the Community-Based Implementation System to Support Education for Children from Low-Income Families in Sukaresmi District

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Abstract

Poverty in Sukaresmi District, Cianjur Regency, increases the risk of school dropout among children from low-income families. Although the sponsorship programme implemented by Yayasan Usaha Mulia (YUM) supports children's educational continuity, limited parental involvement and weak collaboration with local resource systems remain key challenges. This study aimed to develop a community-based implementation system strengthening design through the Sponsorship Parents Community to support children's education. Using a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, the study involved reflection, needs assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation, and final design development. Data were collected through focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis involving community members and local resource actors. The findings show that strengthening actors, resources, structures, and procedures improved community organisation, capacity building, and collaboration among Sponsorship Project Officers, SIKS-NG operators, PIP operators, PSM, and TKSK. By 14 April 2026, 26 households had been registered in DTSEN, 17 households were recorded as PIP beneficiaries, and only one household remained unregistered. The study concludes that community empowerment and social network-based implementation can improve community functioning and educational access for low-income families.

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Contents

Abstract	529
Introduction	530
Methods.....	531
Results and Discussions.....	532
Conclusion.....	538
Reference	539

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Introduction

Education is one of the most important instruments for breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty because it increases employment opportunities and future income prospects (World Bank, 2018; UNESCO, 2023). However, children from poor families continue to face multiple barriers in accessing and completing education, including economic constraints, limited access to information, and inadequate support from social systems. These conditions place many children at risk of school dropout and reduce their chances of continuing to higher levels of education.

The dropout situation in Cianjur Regency between 2023 and 2025 reflects a serious educational problem. According to the Head of the Cianjur Regency Education, Youth, and Sports Office, 1,580 junior high school students did not continue to senior secondary education (SMA/SMK), of whom 1,022 shifted to non-formal education and 558 permanently dropped out due to economic reasons. In addition, data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) and the Ministry of Education in 2024 showed that 367 elementary school students (SD/MI) and 186 junior secondary school students (SMP/MTs) were identified as dropouts. More recently, data from the Center for Data and Information Technology (Pusdatin) of the Ministry of Education in 2025 showed that the number of out-of-school children (Anak Tidak Sekolah/ATS) in Cianjur Regency reached 53,094. These conditions are influenced by family breakdown, economic hardship, limited access to education, and the persistence of early marriage practices. If left unaddressed, such conditions may reinforce the intergenerational poverty cycle, in which children from poor families grow up with limited education and skills and remain trapped in poverty in adulthood (Myrdal, 1968).

To support the education of children from poor families, Yayasan Usaha Mulia (YUM) Cianjur has developed a family-based sponsorship program that provides educational assistance, nutritional packages, health examinations, child capacity-building activities, and social support services for beneficiary families. However, the implementation of the program has remained largely child-centered and centrally managed by the organization, which has limited parental involvement in supporting children's education. In response to this limitation, a preliminary design to strengthen the implementation system was developed through the establishment of the Sponsorship Parents Community (Komunitas Orang Tua Penerima Sponsorship). This design aimed to clarify community structure, role distribution, coordination mechanisms, and collaboration among sponsorship parents, social workers, and local stakeholders. The design was grounded in Netting et al. (2016), who emphasize the importance of strengthening the capacities of individuals and groups to influence their living conditions. Nevertheless, reflective evaluations indicated that KOMPAS still depended heavily on the organization, was not optimally integrated with local resource systems, and lacked robust collaboration with schools and social welfare actors at the village and sub-district levels.

Previous studies have shown that family and community involvement plays an important role in supporting educational success among children from poor families. Kobayashi and Ogawa (2025) found that parental and community participation improves educational support through collaboration with schools and local stakeholders. Rahmat (2014) argued that access to education for poor children depends not only on formal education systems but also on collective community action that provides social support and solidarity networks. Similarly, Muzakkir and Yunanda (2021) reported that although parents from poor households recognize the importance of education, their involvement is constrained by limited resources, time, and systemic support. Studies on implementing systems and social networks also highlight the importance of structured and collaborative mechanisms. Milenia

(2024) found that strengthening implementation systems through capacity building among implementers improved the effectiveness of stunting prevention programs. Victoria (2024) further demonstrated that social network development and multi-stakeholder partnerships could strengthen community support and improve the effectiveness of empowerment programs.

Despite these findings, previous studies have generally focused on parental participation, family empowerment, or social network development to support children's education. They have not specifically developed a community-based implementation system that systematically connects sponsorship parents with local resource systems. In this regard, a strong implementation system is essential because it determines how actors, resources, structures, and procedures function in an integrated manner to achieve program objectives. Without such a system, families' access to educational and social protection services tends to remain individualistic, poorly coordinated, and dependent on separate actors, thereby undermining the sustainability of support.

Based on these conditions, there is a need to develop a community-based implementation system that not only strengthens parental participation but also integrates communities with local resource systems that play important roles in supporting the education of children from poor families. This study offers novelty through the development of a community-based implementation system that connects sponsorship parents with educational and social welfare actors at the local level. The novelty lies not only in positioning parents as active agents in planning, implementing, and strengthening educational support for their children, but also in establishing structured collaborative mechanisms among the parents' community, Sponsorship Project Officers, Social Welfare Information System (SIKS-NG) operators, Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) operators, school counselors/student affairs teachers, Community Social Workers (Pekerja Sosial Masyarakat/PSM), and Sub-district Social Welfare Workers (Tenaga Kesejahteraan Sosial Kecamatan/TKSK). Through these mechanisms, the community no longer functions merely as a group of beneficiaries; instead, it becomes an integral part of the implementation system that continuously connects families with educational resources and social protection services.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach using the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method. PAR was selected because it enables researchers and participants to actively engage in the processes of problem identification, action planning, implementation, reflection, and design development. This approach is consistent with the objective of the study, which is not only to generate knowledge but also to promote social change through strengthening the implementation system within the Sponsorship Parents Community. The study was conducted in Sukaresmi Sub-district, Cianjur Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia, one of the areas assisted by Yayasan Usaha Mulia (YUM) Cianjur in implementing its educational sponsorship program. The research site was selected purposively because it had the largest number of sponsorship beneficiaries, with 27 children, compared with Cipanas Sub-district (21 children) and Pacet Sub-district (19 children). In addition, the area already had an active Sponsorship Parents Community, which made it possible to implement all stages of the PAR process in developing the implementation system strengthening design.

The primary participants in this study included the Project Manager of Yayasan Usaha Mulia (YUM) Cianjur, the YUM Cianjur Sponsorship Project Officer, the Social Welfare Information System-Next Generation (SIKS-NG) Operator of Cibadak Village, the Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) Operator of SMPN 1 Sukaresmi, the Coordinator of Community Social Workers (PSM) in Sukaresmi Sub-district, and the Coordinator of the Sponsorship Parents Community. These

participants were purposively selected because they played strategic roles in managing the sponsorship program and were directly involved in the development of the implementation system.

In addition, members of the Sponsorship Parents Community were involved as supporting participants throughout each stage of the PAR process. A total of 22 community members participated in the first Focus Group Discussion (FGD), which explored reflections on the initial design and identified development needs, and in the second FGD, which focused on planning the design development. During the implementation phase, 41 parents or guardians of sponsorship beneficiaries in Sukaresmi Sub-district took part in the activities. Subsequently, 17 community members participated in the evaluation and reflection FGD to assess the outcomes of the implemented design. Data were collected through FGDs, in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data trustworthiness was ensured through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and discussions with participants and research supervisors. The PAR stages in this study consisted of: (1) reflection on the initial implementation system design; (2) identification of development needs; (3) planning the design development; (4) implementation of the developed design; (5) reflection and evaluation; and (6) formulation of the final design for strengthening the implementation system.

Results and Discussions

1. Reflection on the Initial Implementing System Strengthening Design

Based on the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) conducted on 26 February 2026 involving 22 community members as participants, the initial design demonstrated several strengths. These included the clarity of the organizational structure and actors' roles, the availability of resources provided by YUM Cianjur, the active role of the community coordinator, a systematic implementation process, and the existence of a sponsorship family action plan that encouraged parental involvement in children's education. In addition, opportunities existed to develop collaboration with local resource systems at the village and sub-district levels and to replicate the model in other areas. Nevertheless, several weaknesses were identified. Program implementation remained highly dependent on YUM Cianjur, community participation had not yet reached its full potential, and members' ability to utilize digital services was still limited. Furthermore, access to educational services and social assistance continued to be influenced by external bureaucratic mechanisms and insufficient financial support for strengthening the capacity of poor family communities

2. Needs for Implementation System Development

The reflection process and subsequent FGDs identified four main development needs: strengthening collaboration with local resource systems, enhancing community capacity through community leader training, developing activities that foster social cohesion among members, and securing financial support for community sustainability. Among these, strengthening collaboration with local resource systems emerged as the most urgent need. Community members expected collaboration with village-level Social Welfare Information System-Next Generation (SIKS-NG) operators, school-based Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) operators, Community Social Workers (PSM), and Sukaresmi Sub-district Social Welfare Workers (TKSK) so that information on educational services and social assistance could be accessed more quickly and accurately. This priority was considered directly relevant to improving poor families' access to education and social protection

services and was feasible for immediate implementation. These findings indicate that the community's needs extend beyond internal capacity building to include stronger links with external actors who control access to services and resources. From the perspective of social network theory, this highlights the importance of brokerage roles that connect communities with resource systems and expand access to information, services, and support required by poor families.

3. Planning for Implementing System Development

Based on the identified needs, the researcher, community members, and relevant stakeholders collaboratively formulated a plan to strengthen the implementation system through collaboration with local resource systems. The planning process was participatory and considered community needs, available resources, and potential collaboration opportunities. The design emphasized the involvement of village-level SIKS-NG operators, school-based PIP operators, Community Social Workers (PSM), and Sub-district Social Welfare Workers (TKSK) as integral components of the community implementation system. Their participation was expected to broaden families' access to educational and social protection services.

The development plan consisted of five main activities: (1) coordination and strengthening of actors' roles; (2) preparation of documents and implementation instruments; (3) dissemination of information regarding the National Integrated Socioeconomic Data (DTSEN) and PIP; (4) assistance in using the Cek Bansos application and website; and (5) advocacy and signing of collaborative commitment agreements among stakeholders. These activities were designed to strengthen the key dimensions of the implementation system, namely actors, resources, structure, and procedures.

4. Implementation of the Design Development

a. Dissemination of Information on DTSEN and PIP

Dissemination activities were conducted to improve community members' understanding of DTSEN, mechanisms for updating socioeconomic data, welfare deciles, and procedures for accessing PIP. Pre-test results showed that most participants had limited knowledge of DTSEN and digital-based social services, with 31 participants (75.6%) unfamiliar with the mechanisms for accessing these services. After the dissemination activities, all participants showed improved understanding of DTSEN, welfare deciles, PIP, and the interconnections among these programs in supporting the education of children from poor families. These findings suggest that barriers to accessing educational and social protection services are not caused only by economic limitations, but also by limited information and weak understanding of service mechanisms. The improvement occurred because the learning process was participatory and involved actors with direct authority over the services needed by the community.

From a community empowerment perspective, strengthening knowledge is an important initial step in enabling communities to identify needs, access resources, and make independent decisions. These findings are consistent with Kobayashi and Ogawa (2025), who reported that parental involvement in supporting children's education increases when communication mechanisms and information access between families and educational support systems are adequate.

b. Assistance in the Use of the Cek Bansos Application

Participants also received direct assistance in using the Ministry of Social Affairs' Cek Bansos application and website. This activity aimed to improve community members' ability to independently access information on social assistance programs. Through this mentoring process, participants

learned how to verify their social assistance status, understand the proposal and objection features for data correction, and use digital services to obtain more accurate information.

The activity also served as a strategy to improve digital literacy among community members, which had previously been identified as one of the weaknesses in the implementation system. From the perspective of the implementation system, the use of the Cek Bansos application and website expanded access to resources that had previously been available only through village SIKS-NG operators. Community members' ability to independently access social assistance information reflected increased digital capacity and a stronger position in interacting with public service systems. These findings indicate that strengthening the implementation system requires not only clear structures and procedures, but also actors who are able to use available resources effectively

c. Advocacy and the Signing of Collaborative Commitments

Advocacy activities were carried out to build a shared understanding of the importance of cross-sector collaboration in supporting the education of children from poor families. The advocacy process culminated in the signing of a formal collaborative commitment agreement involving all stakeholders. The agreement outlined role distribution, coordination mechanisms, and each actor's commitment to supporting the sustainable implementation of the program. The establishment of collaborative commitments shows that strengthening the implementation system cannot rely only on improving individual capacity; it also requires strengthening relationships among actors involved in program implementation. According to Netting et al. (2016), program effectiveness is strongly influenced by the interconnectedness of actors, resources, structure, and procedures. Therefore, the involvement of SIKS-NG operators, PIP operators, PSM coordinators, and TKSK personnel in the developed design represents a concrete effort to strengthen the implementation system by expanding the support network accessible to the community.

5. Evaluation and Reflection on the Implementation

Evaluation was conducted through a reflective Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on 14 April 2026 involving community members, the Sponsorship Project Officer, the SIKS-NG Operator, and the Sukaresmi PSM Coordinator. The evaluation findings indicated that the implementation of the design contributed to strengthening the implementation system dimensions proposed by Netting et al., namely actors, resources, structure, and procedures.

In terms of the actors dimension, the range of actors involved expanded through the participation of village SIKS-NG operators, school PIP operators, PSM coordinators, and TKSK personnel in supporting the community. In terms of structure and procedures, the community developed clearer role distribution through the issuance of an official decree establishing the community, coordination mechanisms, sponsorship family action plans, and collaborative commitments among stakeholders. In terms of resources, community members gained improved access to information and educational and social assistance services through the dissemination of DTSEN and PIP information, as well as through the use of the Cek Bansos application and website.

In addition to strengthening individual and community capacities, the implementation of the design improved sponsorship families' access to educational and social protection services. At the beginning of implementation in November 2025, 14 community member families had not yet been registered in the National Integrated Socioeconomic Data (DTSEN). Following implementation, by April 2026, 26 families had been registered in DTSEN, leaving only one family unregistered. In addition, 17 families had been recorded as beneficiaries of the Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP).

These findings indicate that strengthening the implementation system not only enhances community capacity and coordination among actors but also expands poor families' access to educational and social protection services that support the continuity of children's education.

The evaluation further revealed improvements in participants' understanding of DTSEN, PIP, and digital-based social services. Increased capacity enabled community members to access information and services more independently. Coordination between the community and local resource systems also became more effective, allowing information related to social assistance to be accessed more quickly and accurately. The activities additionally helped reduce misunderstandings regarding social assistance mechanisms that had previously occurred within the community.

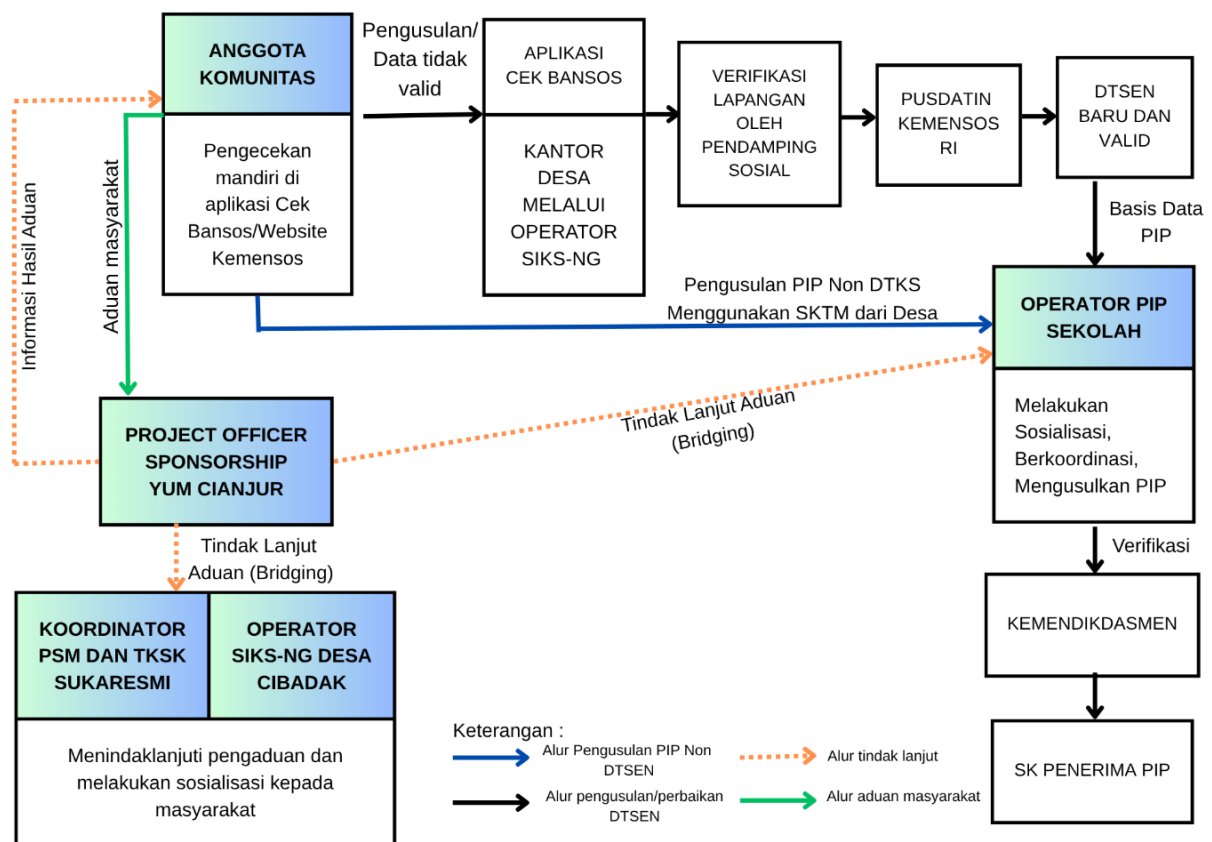


Figure 1. Collaborative Workflow Scheme

Figure 1 illustrates the collaborative flow between the Sponsorship Parents Community and various local resource systems in proposing beneficiaries for the Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP), updating socioeconomic data, and submitting or correcting records in the National Integrated Socioeconomic Data (DTSEN) for poor families. The community functions as a platform for information sharing, coordination, and capacity strengthening among members in accessing the services they need. Within this collaborative mechanism, community members interact directly with village-level SIKS-NG operators regarding socioeconomic data updates and DTSEN submissions, as well as with PIP operators and school personnel concerning educational assistance services. In addition, community members may obtain information and guidance from Community Social

Workers (PSM) and Sub-district Social Welfare Workers (TKSK) on various social welfare programs.

The Sponsorship Project Officer plays an important role in strengthening coordination and communication among actors by facilitating collaboration and ensuring that information obtained by the community is followed up appropriately. This collaborative mechanism shows that support for the education of children from poor families is no longer centered solely on YUM Cianjur, but involves multiple actors with different resources and authorities. Consequently, the community is no longer positioned merely as a beneficiary group; rather, it becomes an integral part of the implementation system that connects families with a range of educational and social protection services through an integrated approach

6. Development of the Final Design

The final design of this study was derived from Netting's (2016) implementation system framework, which emphasizes the integration of people, resources, structure, and procedures in program implementation. The final design consists of four interconnected components: inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes. Its novelty lies in the integration of the Sponsorship Parents Community with local resource systems through a community-based implementation approach grounded in community empowerment and social network perspectives. By positioning parents as active actors within collaborative networks, the design goes beyond strengthening internal community capacity and instead institutionalizes partnerships with local stakeholders who have access to educational and social protection resources. This integrated mechanism enables poor families to obtain more sustainable support, improves coordination among actors, and expands access to services that contribute to the continuity of children's education.

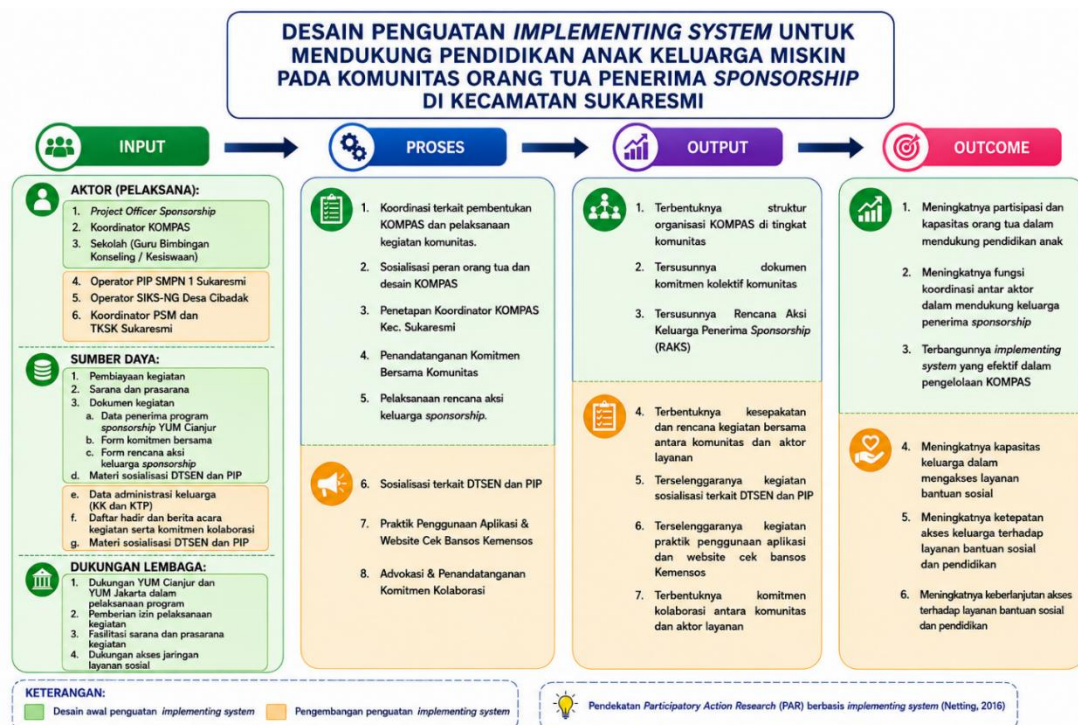


Figure 2. Design of the Implementing System Strengthening

Figure 2 illustrates the final design of the implementing system strengthening model, which consists of four interconnected components: inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes. The input component includes the actors, resources, and institutional support involved in program implementation. The process component encompasses community formation, community capacity strengthening, and the enhancement of collaborative relationships with local resource systems. The resulting outputs include increased capacity among community members, strengthened collaborative networks, and the establishment of clearer coordination mechanisms. Ultimately, the expected outcomes are improved and sustainable access for poor families to educational and social protection services.

7. Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study indicate that strengthening the implementation system goes beyond enhancing individual capacities and also involves reinforcing relationships among actors within the program implementation system. These findings support Netting et al. (2016), who argue that the effectiveness of social programs is shaped by the integration of actors, resources, structure, and procedures as an interconnected system. The strengthened relationships between the Sponsorship Parents Community and SIKS-NG operators, PIP operators, Community Social Workers (PSM), and Sub-district Social Welfare Workers (TKSK) demonstrate that program effectiveness depends not only on the availability of resources but also on the system's capacity to connect the actors involved in implementation.

This study also reinforces community empowerment theory, which emphasizes the importance of strengthening community capacity so that communities can gain greater control over the decisions and resources that affect their lives. The findings suggest that empowerment should not be understood solely as the development of individual knowledge and skills, but also as the expansion of communities' opportunities to access institutional support and participate actively in decision-making processes related to their welfare. Through collaborative mechanisms with local resource systems, community members become better able to identify their needs, access available services, and advocate for their rights independently.

Furthermore, this study contributes to social network theory by highlighting the importance of brokerage functions in linking vulnerable communities with external systems that possess authority, information, and resources. The Sponsorship Parents Community functions not merely as a support group but also as an intermediary actor that facilitates information flow, coordination, and access to educational and social protection services. In this regard, community-based implementation systems can serve as a strategic mechanism for bridging poor families with formal service systems and strengthening the sustainability of social intervention programs (Zimmerman & Perkins, 1995).

Through active involvement in needs identification, planning, implementation, and program evaluation, community members were no longer positioned as passive beneficiaries but rather as actors involved in the process of social change. This participation was reflected in members' ability to develop sponsorship family action plans, independently access DTSEN information, submit and correct socioeconomic data, and understand the procedures for proposing beneficiaries for the Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP). These findings indicate improvements in community capacity, autonomy, and control over available resources, thereby aligning with the concepts of psychological empowerment and community empowerment proposed by Zimmerman and Perkins.

From the perspective of social network theory, strengthening the implementation system occurred through the expansion of relationships between the community and various local resource

systems. SIKS-NG operators, PIP operators, Community Social Workers (PSM), and Sub-district Social Welfare Workers (TKSK) functioned as brokers connecting the community with formal service systems. According to social network theory, actors occupying brokerage positions play a crucial role in facilitating the flow of information, resources, and opportunities among previously disconnected networks (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). The presence of these brokers enabled more effective information exchange, improved access to resources, and enhanced coordination in supporting the education of children from poor families.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Kobayashi and Ogawa (2025), who highlighted the importance of community and parental involvement in supporting children's education through collaboration with schools and local stakeholders. The results also reinforce Wibowo et al. (2016), who suggest that the empowerment of poor families is more effective when implemented through integrated approaches involving multiple support systems. Therefore, this study contributes theoretically by strengthening the linkage among implementation system theory (Netting et al., 2016), community empowerment (Zimmerman & Perkins, 1995), and social network theory (Wasserman & Faust, 1994) in supporting access to education for children from poor families. In this sense, the study offers an integrated conceptual model for linking community empowerment, brokerage mechanisms, and implementation system strengthening in educational support programs for poor families.

Conclusion

This study developed a community-based implementing system strengthening design involving the Sponsorship Parents Community to support the education of children from poor families in Sukaresni Sub-district. The design was developed through a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach that actively involved community members and various stakeholders throughout all stages of the research process. The findings indicate that the initial design possessed strengths in terms of actors' roles and institutional support but continued to face several limitations, including system centralization, limited parental participation, and weak integration with local resource systems. Through community capacity strengthening and the development of collaborative networks with various local resource systems, the implementation of the design successfully enhanced community members' capacities, strengthened cross-sector coordination, and established more structured working mechanisms. Moreover, the implementation contributed to improving sponsorship families' access to educational and social protection services, as evidenced by the increased number of families registered in the National Integrated Socioeconomic Data (DTSEN) and recorded as beneficiaries of the Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP).

The final design emphasizes the integration of actors, resources, structure, and procedures within an input-process-output-outcome framework. These findings demonstrate that strengthening the implementing system not only enhances community capacity but also reinforces the relationships between communities and local resource systems that support the continuity of children's education among poor families. Given these characteristics, the developed design has the potential to be replicated in other YUM-assisted areas, with appropriate adaptations to the specific needs and local contexts of each setting. Based on these findings, it is recommended that YUM and other organizations implementing educational sponsorship programs adopt community-based implementing system approaches that promote collaboration with local educational and social welfare actors. Future studies are encouraged to examine the long-term effectiveness and scalability of this

model in different contexts and to explore its potential contributions to broader poverty reduction and social protection initiatives.

To support the sustainability of the implementation, YUM Cianjur should strengthen community leadership capacity through community leader training and provide adequate financial support for community activities. In addition, schools, PIP Operators, SIKS-NG Operators, Community Social Workers (PSM), Sub-district Social Welfare Workers (TKSK), and community coordinators should enhance ongoing collaboration and assistance to improve poor families' access to educational opportunities and social welfare services. Future research is recommended to examine the applicability of the proposed design in different contexts and settings to further enrich the development of community-based implementing system models. Such studies may also explore the adaptability, scalability, and long-term effectiveness of the model in supporting educational continuity and strengthening social protection mechanisms for vulnerable families

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