

Child Protection in Indonesia's Border Areas: A Qualitative Policy Study from North Central Timor

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Received: 22 May 2025; Revised: 2 February 2026; Accepted: 16 February 2026

Abstract: *Child Protection Policy has become crucial, as it is regulated in the 1945 Constitution and its subordinate regulations, such as laws and ministerial regulations. The research approach used is qualitative research, with data collection techniques including observation, documentation, and interviews. The research findings indicate that (1) the rules show that the local government has legal regulations in place for implementing the child protection system, which serve as guidelines, such as Regional Regulation of North Central Timor Regency Number 15 of 2016 and Numbers 54 and 55 of 2017. However, the village government level has not been formally regulated. (2) the institutional framework, which is implemented by several local government agencies, NGOs, and paralegals. (3) the budget and program where the local government, through the relevant departments, has allocated a budget for child protection programs. Then, at the village government level, activities that accommodate the fulfillment of children's rights in the village are also allocated through youth development activities and health improvement activities.*

Keywords: *Child Protection; Public Policy; Village*

How to Cite:

Fritantus, Y., & Botha, H. H. (2026). Child Protection in Indonesia's Border Areas: A Qualitative Policy Study from North Central Timor. *Journal of Governance*, 11(1), 62–78. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.62870/jog.v11i1.32903>



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Introduction

The protection of children's welfare and rights is a fundamental prerequisite for social stability and sustainable development (Tang, Yu, & Zhu, 2025). In Indonesia, child protection is not only a moral obligation but also a strategic investment in the development of future human resources. This commitment is constitutionally guaranteed under Article 28B paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and further operationalized through Law Number 35 of 2014 on Child Protection. At the policy level, the government has reinforced this mandate through the Child-Friendly District/City framework, as stipulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Number 11 of 2011 and its technical guidelines under Regulation Number 13 of 2010. Moreover, Indonesia's child protection agenda is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, particularly SDG 4 on quality education and SDG 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies, including the prevention of violence against children in educational settings.

In medical literature, child maltreatment is considered a public-health problem or an issue of harm to individuals, but less frequently as a violation of children's human rights (Richard, 2009). In the 2016 Susenas report, around 55 percent of households have children who experience physical punishment and/or psychological aggression from caregivers. Furthermore, the tendency of physical punishment and psychological aggression against children is greater in rural areas than in urban areas; namely, the percentage in rural areas is 57.51 percent, while in urban areas it is 52.3 percent. In terms of toddlers who have birth certificates, there

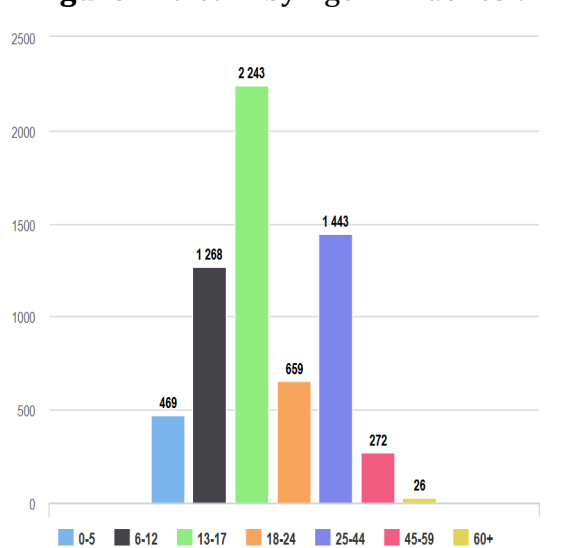
has been an increase, although the increase is quite slow; namely, in 2013, toddlers who had birth certificates were 68.51 percent and increased in 2015 to 72.65 percent.

A national survey on violence against children, conducted in 2018 by the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection, found that 62 percent of girls and boys had experienced one or more forms of violence in their lifetime. The survey also found that one in 11 girls and one in 17 boys had experienced sexual violence, and that three in five girls and half of all boys had experienced emotional violence. 86 Indonesian children experience multiple forms of violence in environments that should be safe and at the hands of people they should be able to trust. New data reveals that Indonesian children are exposed to both psychological aggression and physical punishment at home.

Recent evidence indicates that bullying remains a serious and increasing problem among Indonesian school-aged children, highlighting its relevance in studies on child protection. National data from the Jaringan Pemantau Pendidikan Indonesia (JPPI) show a sharp rise in reported cases of violence in educational settings, including bullying, over the past five years: 91 cases in 2020, 142 in 2021, 194 in 2022, 285 in 2023, and 573 in 2024, and continuing at elevated levels in 2025. Approximately 31% of the reported violence in these environments is directly related to peer bullying (KPAI, JPPI: 2024). Bullying, both physical and psychological, including through social media, is an increasingly prominent problem among Indonesian teenagers. A study by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection concluded that 12–15 percent of boys and girls aged 13–17 had experienced online violence in the past 12

months. Violence against children by teachers is also a significant issue; 20 percent of male students and 75 percent of female students reported being hit, slapped, or intentionally physically injured by a teacher in the past 12 months.

Figure 1. Victim by Age in Indonesia



Source: Author (2025)

In response to the protection of children's rights, the community and village government become key players with a high level of interest and influence in the agenda setting of Child-Friendly Villages (Sulistiowati, dkk: 2020). In addition, there are many academic and methodological studies that can be researched from child protection policies. From the perspective of policy implementation studies, research on the implementation of child-friendly policies has been conducted by Himawati (2013), Reisdian et al. (2016), Sari (2016), and Sulistiowati et al. (2017a, 2017b, 2018) (in Sulistiowati (2018)). Similarly, research focusing on policy formulation has been conducted by Derr et al. (2013), Buda (2016), and Sulistiowati. (2020). From the aforementioned academic studies that have been conducted, this research analyzes child protection policies in

villages from the child's perspective by measuring the planning and outcomes achieved.

This research is particularly relevant given the current conditions of child protection in North Central Timor Regency, where persistent challenges remain despite ongoing policy initiatives. In the North Central Timor Regency, in the context of fulfilling children's rights, the North Central Timor Regency Government has implemented a program and policy for the establishment of Child-Friendly Villages, which has been ongoing since 2019. Specifically, the local government has formed ten child-friendly villages, namely Bitefa Village, Bijeli Village, Lokomea Village, South Letneo Village, Napan Village, Banafanu Village, North Kefamenanu Subdistrict, Bijaepasu Village, and Oenenu Village (Benu, 2020). The declaration of Child-Friendly Villages in North Central Timor Regency as a form of support from the regional government with the target of realizing Child-Friendly Districts/Cities by 2030 and Golden Indonesia by 2045. This research is important because many issues related to children are still found concerning the fulfillment of civil rights and freedoms, the right to education, the use of leisure time and cultural activities, the right to special protection against child violence and exploitation, disabilities, the right to basic health and welfare, and the right to receive good parenting.

From these policies, the government, through the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia, deems it necessary to have a child protection system in villages/sub-districts, including first, strengthening norms and regulations (norms) related to the values agreed upon together to fulfill, protect, and respect children's rights;

second, structure and institutionalization, meaning there are parties/entities/institutions that enforce the implementation of Child-Friendly Villages (KLA) in villages and sub-districts; and third, budget and programs (process), where there is an enhancement of the capacity of service providers and technical or operational standards in the implementation of KLA in villages/sub-districts, and there are prioritized budgets and programs in the implementation of KLA in villages/sub-districts. The child protection system in this village/subdistrict is used to evaluate child protection policies in border villages in North Central Timor Regency.

In examining this research topic, the researcher extracted key factors. The proposed research design is based on the theory of the Indonesian Child Protection Agency's child protection system, namely the NSP system (Norms, Structures, and Processes).

From the data above, this research will prioritize the implementation of child protection system policies in villages. The process of political reform and government change that occurred in 1998 was followed by the birth of Law Number 22 of 1999 concerning Regional Government, which revoked Law Number 5 of 1979 concerning Village and Sub-district Government. In its development, the position of the village was emphasized through Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages.

As regulated in Law Number 6 of 2014, Chapter I, Article 1, paragraph (1), a village is a village, and a traditional village, or one called by another name, hereinafter referred to as a Village, is a legal community unit that has territorial boundaries that is authorized to regulate and manage government affairs and local community interests based on community

initiatives, original rights, and/or traditional rights that are recognized and respected in the government system of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. As a legal community unit that has an original structure based on special rights, a village can carry out legal acts in both public law and civil law, have wealth and property, and be sued and sue in court (Widjaja, 2012).

The emergence of Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government and Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning villages is seen as part of a major process of democratization. Autonomy is not final but rather an initial step. Thus, the content and realization of the content of autonomy become very important. The spirit of regional autonomy is actually to build the independence of the region itself while improving the quality of democracy at the local level. The performance of democracy can be measured by the extent to which existing policy products can foster community initiatives and not dependency. It is important to realize that in the regional autonomy policy, there is also a fundamental aspect, namely regional autonomy, which can be said to be the essence of regional autonomy (Jatmoko, 2006).

With the enactment of Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages on January 15, 2014, the regulation of villages has undergone significant changes. In terms of regulation, villages (or with other names that have been specifically/separately regulated) are no longer part of Law Number 32 of 2004 concerning Regional Government. Villages in Indonesia will experience a repositioning and new approach in the implementation of development and governance. In essence, the Village Law has a vision and engineering that provides broad authority to villages in the field of organizing village

governance, implementing village development, fostering village communities, and empowering village communities based on community initiatives, original rights, and village customs.

Method

Research is basically a scientific way to obtain data with certain goals and uses. In general, data obtained from research can be used to understand, solve, and anticipate problems (Sugiyono, 2014). This study uses a qualitative descriptive method. This study employs a qualitative research method with a case study approach to explore the implementation of child protection policies in North Central Timor Regency. The qualitative method is used to capture in-depth information on actors' experiences, interpretations, and interactions in the implementation process. Data collection is conducted through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The key analytical variables examined in this study include (1) policy norms, focusing on the understanding and interpretation of child protection regulations at the local level; (2) institutional structures, including the roles, coordination mechanisms, and capacities of government agencies, village institutions, and related stakeholders; and (3) resources and implementation practices, covering budget allocation, human resources, program activities, and service delivery mechanisms. These variables are analyzed across multiple levels—individual, organizational, and policy contexts—using data derived from interviews with policymakers and implementers, field observations in Child-Friendly Villages, and official documents such as laws, policy reports, and media coverage (Atkinson, 2017).

Result and Discussion

Child Protection Policy in Villages

The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Article 28B paragraph (2), UUD 1945 mandates that "Every child has the right to survive, grow, and develop and has the right to protection from violence and discrimination." To ensure that Indonesian children can grow and develop optimally, the government has issued policies and programs that support the fulfillment of children's rights and protection, including by ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international instruments, ratifying various laws and regulations related to children, and issuing a national strategy for the elimination of violence against children.

Some of these policies related to child protection are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, this year focusing on education (SDG 4) and peaceful societies (SDG 16), including eradicating violence in schools. From the Development Agenda, the slogan "leaving no one behind" is the heart of sustainable development 2030. SDGs focus on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Furthermore, it is also regulated in Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Amendments to Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection. On the other hand, in accelerating the fulfillment of children's rights and child protection, a Child-Friendly Regency/City (KLA) policy has been prepared and has been stipulated through the Regulation of the Minister of State for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Number 11 of 2011 concerning the Child-Friendly Regency/City Policy.

In article 1, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Regulation of the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the

Republic of Indonesia Number 6 of 2024 concerning Guidelines for Community-Based Child Protection in Supporting the Eradication of Child Labor, Child Protection is all activities to guarantee and protect children and their rights so that they can live, grow, develop, and participate optimally in accordance with human dignity and honor, and receive protection from violence and discrimination. Children's rights are delineated in the principles and articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Crucially, these include rights of provision of services and of participation in society, besides rights of protection and care. The articles of the UNCRC and the distinction between these different types of rights are described in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted by the UN in 1989 and was rapidly ratified by most countries in the world. 7. Ratification requires countries to report every 5 years to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, which monitors implementation of the convention. The convention sets out rights for the survival, development, well-being, and participation of children up to the age of 18 years. The committee has divided the provisions of the convention into clusters as follows: General principles such as non-discrimination, the best interests of the child being the main consideration, and respect for the views of the child; Civil rights and freedoms, such as a right to an identity, freedom of expression, and protection of privacy; Family environment and alternative care, such as the right to be cared for by parents and to an alternative secure form of care, such as adoption, if deprived of a family environment; Basic health and welfare, such as the right to health care and to an adequate standard of living; Education, leisure, and cultural activities, such as the right to leisure and

play; Special protection measures, such as for refugee children, those in the juvenile justice system, and those belonging to a minority group.

Rights can more conveniently be divided into those of protection, participation, and provision: rights of protection include the right to be protected from any form of maltreatment or exploitation; rights of participation enable children to be involved in decisions and actions that affect them and allow them to participate actively in society. They include the right for children to express and have due weight given to views about decisions affecting them, and rights of provision include the right to education and the obligation of the state to support parents and families.

With the existence of the Child-Friendly Regency/City policy and with the intention of facilitating the development of Child-Friendly Regency and providing a reference for villages/sub-districts in realizing Child-Friendly Villages/Sub-districts, the Regulation of the Minister of State for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia Number 13 of 2010 concerning Technical Instructions for Child-Friendly Regency/City in Villages/Sub-districts was issued. From these policies, the government, through the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia, considers the need for a child protection system in villages, including first, strengthening norms and regulations (norms), which are related to values that are mutually agreed upon to fulfill, protect, and respect children's rights; second, structure and institutions, namely, there are parties/elements/institutions that enforce the implementation of Child-Friendly Regency in Villages and Sub-districts; and third, budget and program

(process), where there is strengthening of the capacity of service provider HR, there are technical or operational standards in the implementation of Child-Friendly Regency in Villages, and there is a budget and programs that are prioritized in the implementation of Child-Friendly Regency in Villages.

Information about North Central Timor Regency's Child Violence

Based on the table, it can be described that the cases of child violence

in Timor Tengah Utara Regency in 2021 were 32 cases, and in 2022 there were 31 cases. From the data on child violence cases, collaborative governance between government and private institutions is needed to provide optimal services to children who are victims of violence so that the status of child violence in Timor Tengah Utara Regency decreases and children also receive their rights, namely the right to protection. Where this data increased in 2023 to 100 cases of women and children and in 2024 to 95 cases.

Table 1. Data on Child Violence Cases in Timor Tengah Utara Regency for the Years 2021-2022

No	Type of Case	2021	2022
1.	Physical violence	13	3
2.	Psychological violence	-	2
3.	Sexual violence	15	26
4.	Child abandonment	4	-
Amount		32	31

Source: Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office of North Central Timor Regency (2023)

Furthermore, based on data from the Social Service Office of North Central Timor Regency, children with special needs or disabilities in North Central Timor Regency

who receive services from Special Schools (in Indonesian: Sekolah Luar Biasa) are detailed as follows:

Table 2. Data on Disabled Children in School (SLB)

No.	Jenjang Pendidikan	Amount
1.	Elementary School	90
2.	Junior High School	53
3.	High School	13
Amount		156

Source: Social Service Office of North Central Timor Regency (2024)

The data above, when compared to the number of children with special needs in North Central Timor Regency with disabled children attending school (in Indonesian:

Sekolah Luar Biasa), is still not optimal. According to the data, the number of children with special needs in North Central Timor Regency is detailed as follows:

Table 3. Number of Children Based on Types of Disabilities in TTU Regency

No.	Types of Disabilities	Amount
1.	Physically Disabled	310 People
2.	Down Syndrome	33 People
3.	Mental	133 People
4.	Low Vision	65 People
5.	speech impaired	135 People
6.	mentally disabled	10 People
7.	Total Blind	22 People
8.	Ex-leprosy	30 People
9.	Autistic	12 People

10	Deaf	123 People
Amount (*Not included yet SLB Naiola As many as 31 people)		873 People

Source: Social Service Office of North Central Timor Regency (2024)

From the data collected by researchers, there are 3,052 children recorded at the Social Service Office of North Central Timor Regency, where 1,062 children are served by Social Welfare Institutions and Children (in Indonesian: Lembaga Kesejahteraan Sosial dan Anak), or orphanages, and 270 children receive attention for orphans and abandoned children (in Indonesian: Yayasan Anak Yatim Piatu).

Child Protection Policy in Villages in North Central Timor Regency

1. Norms and Rules

The norms and regulations referred to are efforts to strengthen norms and regulations (norms) related to collectively agreed values to fulfill, protect, and respect children's rights. To this end, the researcher conducted data collection by confirming the norms and regulations that serve as the foundation for implementing the child protection system in the village by consulting the Head of the Child Protection Division of the P3A Office of North Central Timor Regency. The information obtained indicates that the North Central Timor Regency Government certainly implements programs or activities related to child protection based on predetermined rules/norms, including referring to the Regulation of the Minister of State for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia Number 13 of 2010 concerning Technical Guidelines for Child-Friendly Districts/Cities in Villages/Sub-districts and Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Amendments to Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection. In order to

fulfill the Child-Friendly Regency (KLA), village participation is needed to realize it, so the formation of a Child-Friendly Village is needed. The formation of a child-friendly village is one of the success factors in the development of a child-friendly city/district. In relation to legal protection for children, we need to know that by realizing a child-friendly village, the above objectives will be realized (Erdianti, R.N. & Al-Fatih, S.; 2019).

These regulations are used as a reference in implementing all programs or activities related to child protection in North Central Timor Regency. Additionally, referring to the Child-Friendly Village/Urban Village policy, the Government of North Central Timor Regency has designated several villages and urban villages as part of its strategy to strengthen child protection at the community level. In this context, a Child-Friendly Village/Urban Village is conceptualized as a village-level governance framework that integrates children's rights into local development planning, service delivery, and social institutions. The program emphasizes the fulfillment of children's rights across five key clusters, namely: (1) civil rights and freedoms, (2) family environment and alternative care, (3) basic health and welfare, (4) education, leisure, and cultural activities, and (5) special protection from violence, exploitation, and neglect.

At the implementation level, the Child-Friendly Village initiative in North Central Timor Regency involves the establishment of child protection task forces at the village level, the

incorporation of child protection indicators into village development plans, and cross-sector collaboration between village governments, schools, health facilities, and community organizations. As of the latest implementation phase, the villages and urban areas designated as

Child-Friendly Villages/Urban Villages include Bitefa Village, Bijeli Village, Lokomea Village, Letneo Selatan Village, Napan Village, Banafanu Village, North Kefamenanu Subdistrict, Bijaepasu Village, Taekas Village, and Oenenu Village, as presented in the table below.

Table 4. Data on Child-Friendly Villages in Timor Tengah Utara Regency

No.	Village	Year of Establishment
1.	Bijeli Village	2019
2.	Bitefa Village	2019
3.	Letneo Selatan Village	2020
4.	Lokomea Village	2020
5.	Napan Village	2020
6.	Banfanu Village	2021
7.	Oenenu Village	2021
8.	North Kefamenanu Subdistrict	2021
9.	Bijaepasi Village	2022
10.	Kuanek Village	2022

Source: Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office of North Central Timor Regency (2024)

The declaration of Child-Friendly Villages in North Central Timor Regency as a form of support from the regional government with the target of realizing Child-Friendly Districts/Cities by 2030 and Golden Indonesia by 2045. In realizing child protection policies in North Central Timor Regency, the North Central Timor Regency Government is based on Regional Regulation Number 15 of 2016 concerning Child Protection Management and Regent Regulation Number 54 of 2017 concerning the Implementation Regulation of Regional Regulation Number 15 of 2016 concerning Child Protection Management. From the above regulations and Regent Regulation Number 55 of 2017 concerning Standard Operating Procedures for Handling Cases of Violence Against Women and Children. These two regulations are in line with several state legal products on the protection of women, namely the Criminal Code, Law No. 23 of 2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence, and the CEDAW Convention, which was ratified by Law No. 7 of 1984.

Regional regulations and regent regulations related to the implementation of child protection encourage the formation of paralegal groups in villages and initiate draft village regulations to provide protection for women and children who experience domestic violence or other gender-based violence. The draft village regulations also aim to change customary practices related to resolving domestic conflicts and reporting cases of violence, which tend to favor men (Bayo, L.N., dan Tanaya, S.; 2020).

Although national policies have been established, based on the findings of the researcher, there are no specific regulations at the village government level, such as village regulations, that address child protection. This was acknowledged by several village heads as research informants, who stated that the village government so far has only been carrying out routine activities, especially those specifically for children, with a greater emphasis on budget allocation to facilitate children's activities in the village.

This is also evident when it was mentioned that in the process of resolving disputes or cases related to child protection, if the resolution is not through legal means (litigation), then the resolution will be carried out through family or customary methods. (Non-Litigation).

In North Central Timor Regency, like most other regions in Indonesia, policies ranging from the Constitution to laws to regional regulations have not produced sustainable positive results for children in North Central Timor Regency. Indeed, these positive results can only be achieved if policies, both international and domestic, are rethought to identify and prioritize the needs, interests, and realities of children (Bessell, 1999).

However, it also highlights persistent challenges, including weak enforcement mechanisms, legal gaps, resource constraints, cultural barriers, and limited awareness. These findings can serve as valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and advocates in South Asia. By building upon successful initiatives and effectively addressing obstacles, they can foster regional collaboration to strengthen child protection systems, ultimately ensuring a safer and more secure environment for children in the region (Islam, 2025).

The above, in line with the research conducted by Bayo, L.N., and Tanaya, S. (2020), specifically in North Central Timor Regency, shows that many influencing factors, including a combination of patriarchal cultural factors, religious norms, and limited access to infrastructure, are the causes of high levels of domestic violence, violence against women, and violence against children. In the process of resolving disputes, conflicts, or internal household disputes, such as domestic violence, the settlement is carried out according to customary law,

which recognizes the term 'table money' (in Indonesian: uang meja) (Bayo, L.N., dan Tanaya, S.; 2020).

These are important issues for the legitimacy of the state itself. Although the state has a duty to protect the vulnerable, it cannot afford to undermine the freedom of parents to bring up their children in the ways they see as most appropriate. Three interrelated issues have therefore always provided key contexts for child-protection services and legislation: the role of parents in relation to the state in cases of disagreement about a child's need for protection, the scope of the government's intervention, and the nature of the government's intervention (Reading et al., 2009).

2. Structure and Institutions

In the implementation of the child protection system in the village, based on an interview with the Head of the Child Protection Division of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office (Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak) of North Central Timor Regency, it was obtained that in the implementation of the child protection system in North Central Timor Regency, there are several related offices or agencies that collaborate in efforts to strengthen the child protection system, including the Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak, Social Service Office, Health Office, Population and Civil Registration Office, North Central Timor Police Resort, District Attorney's Office in collaboration with Non-Governmental Organizations such as Yabiku, and several others. Specifically, the Department of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak) and the Social Department have special units that handle

child protection, namely the Pusat Pelayanan Terpadu Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Anak (P2TP2A), the PPA Unit for witness protection, and the Social Department's Sospek section that accompanies the police.

Next, the information obtained when the researcher wanted to gather information, as a child protection system in the village and also as an extension of the Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of North Central Timor Regency, was how the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office (Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak) of North Central Timor Regency can control down to the village level so that it is obtained that to maximize the child protection system down to the village, the government has formed or assigned several people in each sub-district area as an extension of the government known as paralegals. Paralegals receive assignment letters from the Village Government and also from the Office.

To clarify the information regarding the paralegals mentioned above, the researcher collected data by separately interviewing the village heads and paralegals in Banfanu Village, Kuanek Village, Oenenu Village, Napan Village, and Bitefa Village. It was found that paralegals in the village have the task of assisting children and women who experience violence. The assistance provided takes the form of litigation assistance, which involves legal support or legal channels, and non-litigation assistance, where the resolution of child-related issues is handled amicably by applying local wisdom specific to each region. Regarding non-litigation resolution, which is conducted according to local customs, the process can be described as follows, although not all villages are the same: the

resolution of issues is handled by the village chief. If a resolution is not found, the matter will be brought to the neighborhood association leader for mediation, and so on, continuing to the hamlet if no resolution is reached. It is possible to resolve the matter through legal means or through litigation stages where paralegals accompany the victim to law enforcement and proceed according to existing legal regulations. This non-litigation resolution is excluded for acts of rape.

With the existence of the two regional regulations above, which are the legal basis at the district level, the process of initiation and preparation of regulations at the village level can be more accommodated. In addition, there are efforts for institutional change at the district level through intervention of change at the village level. There are two important things that have been done in the village, namely forming community-based services (in Indonesian: Layanan Berbasis Komunitas) in the form of paralegal groups; this is advocacy carried out by YABIKU.

This Paralegal Group has the task of implementing a protection system for survivors of violence in the village and also bringing complaint services closer to survivors. The strong structure of customs in village life makes their role impossible to ignore in efforts to encourage change. In the selection of paralegal members, the element of traditional figures is the main and important consideration. The same thing was also conveyed by the Head of Banfanu Village based on the results of the interview as quoted below, namely, "In Banfanu Village, in an effort to implement child protection policies, the village government has assigned several traditional figures, women's figures, and religious figures through the Decree of the

Village Head and the Decree from the P3A Service to appoint 1 traditional figure as a paralegal to help with socialization and mentoring of children in the village." These figures are also assisted by 3 (three) large tribes in Banfanu Village.

3. Budget and Program

Where there is strengthening of the capacity of human resources providing services, there are technical or operational standards in the implementation of the child protection system in villages/sub-districts, and there are budgets and programs prioritized in the implementation of child protection in villages. In an effort to accommodate the needs or fulfill the rights of children in the village, the Regional Government through the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office (Dinas P3A) of North Central Timor Regency allocates a budget to finance activities or programs related to child protection programs, such as the first dimension, which is curative through legal assistance, and the second dimension through rehabilitative measures such as assistance, mental recovery through victim outreach programs, provision of specific needs, and free health care for underage victims. The third dimension is preventive, involving socialization in schools (bullying, intolerance), distributing stickers and templates to schools, providing written materials to agencies/offices, facilitating the formation of children's forums in villages, and declaring child-friendly villages (Benu, A.; 2024). And the others, the district government and the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency (DP3A) of North Central Timor Regency, held a community mobilization

and empowerment meeting in efforts to prevent violence against women and children (KtPA), human trafficking (TPPO), children in conflict with the law (ABH), and child marriage. However, these programs or activities are still sectoral and not yet integrated, as well as the standard operating procedures related to handling child cases, where, as mentioned by the resource person, there is currently no integrated standard operating procedure (SOP) among all relevant agencies.

On the other hand, although it is acknowledged that there is no integrated SOP yet, the relevant departments always coordinate, both formally and informally, as a form of coordination in an effort to expedite the resolution of child cases in North Central Timor Regency. The researcher also sought to clarify the budget for paralegals in North Central Timor Regency and obtained information from the Head of the Child Protection Division of the P3A Office of North Central Timor Regency and the paralegals that these paralegals work voluntarily but are always provided with training from the regional, provincial, and central governments. Additionally, village governments allocate Village Funds (by the Village Government) for paralegal transportation during accompaniment, although not all villages and not every year include this in the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget (in Indonesian: Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Desa), which affects the number of activities adjusted to the government budget. This is evident, for example, through the budget allocation for activities carried out by the Social Service Office of North Central Timor Regency, as shown in the table below:

Table 5. 2023 Budget for Social Service Activities Related to Child Protection

No.	Program	Activity	Budget
1.	Social Empowerment Program	Development of Regional Social Welfare Resource Potential for District/City	540.233.260
2.	Social Rehabilitation Program	Basic social rehabilitation for abandoned persons with disabilities, abandoned children, abandoned elderly, and homeless beggars outside social shelters.	241.827.473
3.	Social security protection program	Care for abandoned children	34.498.485
4.	Disaster management program	Social protection for victims of natural and social disasters in districts/cities/City	90.960.556
Amount			907.519.774

Source: Social Service Office of North Central Timor Regency (2024)

For the village government, a budget has been allocated to fulfill children's rights in the village through youth development activities in the Karang Taruna (Youth Community) group, activities that are integrated with health improvement activities such as Supplementary Feeding (PMT) to reduce stunting. In the village, many children's problems occur and take various forms, such as physical, psychological, sexual, and emotional violence. Many cases occur in the village, such as neglect or exploitation, vulnerability to disasters, and children who have problems with the law and others. Therefore, the village should be more responsive to the problems faced related to child protection. Because the village is close to the child, they are the ones who always witness the complexity of children's problems in the village. Compared to higher government structures, the village is directly confronted and close to children. The problem is, the village government is not prepared to respond to problems with children that have recently become increasingly widespread. In addition, the village does not have adequate institutional equipment to respond to various cases of child protection. There are

almost no institutions in the village that have main tasks and functions that are specifically attached to child protection matters. The result is that child protection cases are often responded to very late. In addition to the absence of village officials or institutions in the village that focus on child welfare and protection, the budget allocated for child protection activities is also minimal. Many village officials do not dare to allocate village funds to respond to child protection cases so that with the existing village fund usage regulations, village funds can be allocated for child protection activities (Permatasari, A.; 2019).

The government, as the party responsible for organizing public order and public tranquility, is clearly the hope for all Indonesian citizens (WNI) to obtain the same protection and security rights, including children. The regional government has an obligation to allocate a budget for child protection, which is part of the mandatory affairs as mandated in Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government and Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Amendments to the Child Protection Law, which emphasizes that the government and regional governments are obliged to organize child

protection. Likewise in Government Regulation Number 101 of 2022 concerning the National Strategy for the Elimination of Violence Against Children (PKTA). Provincial and Regency/City Regional Governments in organizing the Prevention and Handling of Violence against Children. Government representation as a budget user should be able to answer regional problems, one of which is child protection.

The above is because the level of multidimensional child development is measured by 26 indicators, representing child education, health, nutrition, protection, and participation in the frameworks of child rights and UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (Muttur Ranganathan, 2024).

Factors Influencing Child Protection Policies from a Child's Perspective by Village Governments in North Central Timor Regency

This study argues that the effectiveness of child protection policies in North Central Timor Regency is determined not by the existence of regulations alone, but by the coherence of the child protection system, particularly the interaction between norms, structures, and processes at the village level. Using the Child Protection System framework, the findings reveal systemic weaknesses that explain why child protection outcomes remain limited despite extensive policy commitments.

From the perspective of norms, national and regional regulations related to child protection are already well established. However, this study finds a critical regulatory gap at the village level, where no formal village regulations specifically govern child protection. As a result, policy implementation relies heavily on informal customary norms that

are deeply embedded in patriarchal culture. These social norms often normalize violence, discourage reporting, and prioritize family or customary settlement over children's rights. This finding supports the theoretical assumption within the child protection system that formal legal norms are insufficient when informal social norms remain dominant and unchallenged.

In terms of structures, child protection responsibilities in North Central Timor Regency are distributed across multiple government agencies, law enforcement bodies, and non-governmental organizations. While this multi-actor configuration reflects a collaborative governance arrangement, the absence of an integrated institutional framework has led to fragmented coordination, sectoral Standard Operating Procedures, and weak data-sharing mechanisms. The reliance on paralegals and community-based actors illustrates an adaptive institutional response; however, their voluntary status and limited resources constrain the sustainability of protection services. This finding extends child protection system theory by demonstrating how institutional plurality without structural integration can reduce system effectiveness, particularly in border and resource-constrained regions.

Regarding processes, the study identifies inconsistencies in program implementation, budgeting, and monitoring mechanisms. Strategic support for child protection is highly dependent on political leadership at the village level and is vulnerable to disruption caused by leadership turnover and external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, children's participation in village development planning remains symbolic rather than institutionalized, undermining the participatory principle of

child protection systems. These process-related weaknesses indicate that the operational dimension of the child protection system has not been fully internalized into routine governance practices.

Theoretical Contribution and Novelty

This study contributes to the child protection system literature by providing empirical evidence from a border-area village context, which remains underexplored in existing research. Unlike previous studies that focus on policy formulation or urban-level implementation, this research demonstrates that systemic failure in child protection emerges from misalignment among norms, structures, and processes at the village level. The novelty of this study lies in its identification of village governance as the critical missing link in Indonesia's child protection system, particularly in regions where customary norms and decentralized governance intersect. By foregrounding children's lived realities within village institutions, this research advances the child protection system framework beyond a legal-institutional perspective toward a more context-sensitive and multi-level governance approach.

Policy Implications

The findings imply that strengthening child protection in border areas requires system-level interventions, including the formalization of village-level child protection regulations, institutional integration across agencies, sustainable support for community-based actors, and deliberate strategies to transform harmful social norms. Without addressing these systemic dimensions simultaneously, child protection policies risk remaining symbolic rather than transformative.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the NSP Concept (Norms, Structures and Institutions, and Processes/Budgets and Programs) of child protection by the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia, namely, and alternative policies, the team classifies the alternative policies into short-term and medium-term recommendations. As a short-term recommendation, we encourage the alternative of accelerating the establishment of an integrated Standard Operating Procedure so as to minimize limitations in protecting children. The next step is to increase strategic support through assistance for village governments in organizing a child protection system in the village and to develop a digital-based reporting system so that reaching victims is easier. The alternative that is a long-term recommendation is the implementation of the preparation or regulations related to the Child Protection System in the Village and the implementation of intensive and comprehensive socialization related to the child protection system in the village.

Acknowledgments

The Author extends the gratitude towards every helpful input during the publication process and for Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat Universitas Timor as the funder.

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