# The Role of City Facilities in Encouraging Community Participation in Urban Planning in West Nias

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Abtract - This study aims to analyze the role of city facilities in encouraging community participation in urban planning in West Nias. Community participation is an important element in the success of sustainable and inclusive urban development, while adequate city facilities have the potential to be a means of social interaction that can stimulate community involvement. With a descriptive-qualitative approach, this study evaluates the availability, condition, and accessibility of city facilities, including green open spaces (RTH), transportation infrastructure, and community activity centers. The results of the study indicate that although regional expansion aims to improve public services, the challenges faced by West Nias in maintaining and repairing public facilities hinder the optimization of community participation. The inadequate condition of facilities, limited accessibility especially for vulnerable groups, and the lack of transparency of information related to urban planning are the main obstacles that need to be overcome. This study suggests improvements in management and accessibility of city facilities through collaboration between the government and the community to create an urban environment that supports active citizen involvement. These findings are expected to be the basis for formulating policies and strategies for developing more inclusive and sustainable urban infrastructure in West Nias.

Keywords: Urban Facilities, Community Participation, Urban Planning, West Nias.

## I. INTRODUCTION

West Nias Regency is one of the administrative areas in the western part of Nias Island, North Sumatra, Indonesia. This regency was formed through the expansion of Nias Regency based on Law Number 46 of 2008. On May 26, 2009, West Nias Regency was inaugurated by the Minister of Home Affairs, H. Mardiyanto, marking its birth as a New Autonomous Region (DOB). This expansion took place during the reign of Nias Regent Binahati B. Baeha, with the approval of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, as an effort to improve government services and development in the region. In 2020, the population of West Nias Regency was recorded at 89,994 people with a density of 173 people per km<sup>2</sup>. This number continues to increase, and in mid-2023, the population was recorded at 97,633 people with a density of 190 people per km<sup>2</sup>. This increase in population shows the potential for stable population growth. West Nias Regency

consists of 8 sub-districts which are further divided into 105 villages, indicating that this region has an administrative structure that supports management at the village level.

The demographics of West Nias Regency are dominated by Christians, with a percentage of around 97.62%, consisting of 78.28% Protestant and 19.34% Catholic, while the rest are Muslim (2.37%) and Buddhist (0.01%). The main languages used are Indonesian and Nias, reflecting a strong and distinctive local culture. Geographically, the regency covers an area of around 520.34 km<sup>2</sup>. The regency is under the leadership of Regent Khenoki Waruwu and Deputy Regent Era Era Hia, supported by Regional Secretary Fakhili Gulö. With this leadership, it is hoped that various development programs can run well to improve the welfare of the community. The West Nias Human Development Index (HDI) increased to 64.68 in 2023. This increase shows improvements in aspects of education, health, and living standards in this region, although it is still below the national average. This shows that West Nias Regency continues to strive to develop various sectors to achieve sustainable development equity, in order to improve the quality of life of people throughout the region.



Image: West Nias Source: google maps

The importance of the role of city facilities in increasing community participation in urban planning. In the context of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, regional autonomy granted by the 1945 Constitution opens up space



for communities and local governments to be actively involved in democratic and inclusive development planning. However, in its implementation, communities are often less accustomed to actively participating in planning and identifying shared needs. The implementation of Law Number 22 of 1999, which regulates regional autonomy, is still often misunderstood by the community, so that the city development process is often considered only the responsibility of the government. In reality, the principle of community participation and justice in development is highly expected to create balance in the utilization of local resources and equalize the benefits of development. Unfortunately, community involvement is often minimal, and they only become recipients of development benefits without playing a role in the planning process.

Community participation in development requires supporting facilities, such as inclusive public spaces, easily accessible public transportation, and other basic facilities. When city facilities are adequate, people will feel more comfortable and enthusiastic to participate in planning and maintaining the urban environment. The government needs to facilitate this participation with an approach that directly involves the community, such as the Community Direct Assistance (BLM) program which develops planning based on the real needs of residents, both in social, economic, and physical aspects of the environment. This approach has proven effective in strengthening community social resilience and responding to local needs. Building community participation in urban planning is not only beneficial for the success of the program, but also increases community awareness of the urban environment. With the principles of justice, transparency, accountability, and decentralization, communities are expected to be able to independently identify problems and potentials in their areas, plan and implement targeted development activities. This effort aims to create an inclusive, livable, and sustainable city according to the needs of its citizens, strengthen self-reliance, and improve the quality of life of the community.

In an effort to build sustainable participation, there are several important principles that need to be applied by the government and the community. According to Parwoto (2000), participatory development must involve community awareness in identifying needs and taking an active role in decision-making that directly impacts their lives. This requires a balanced top-down (from the government) and bottom-up (from the community) approach. This combined approach allows the integration of macro perspectives (city scale) with micro (local) needs, resulting in relevant and effective policies. Direct community involvement is key to maintaining the sustainability and accountability of urban development. Abdul Kahar Muzakir et al. (1999) stated that community involvement, especially in village improvement projects, is an important factor in success. This participation is not only in the form of physical presence in the implementation, but also includes involvement in planning, monitoring, maintaining development results. When development projects are in accordance with local needs, the community will be more motivated to support and maintain the results.

This approach that emphasizes collaboration in city management also needs to pay attention to the principle of self-reliance or self-empowerment. According to Bambang Ismawan (2003), the ability of communities to recognize their strengths and weaknesses, and to take advantage of

opportunities in their surroundings, is an important foundation for overcoming common challenges, such as poverty and inequality. In practice, this can be realized through the formation of self-help groups at the community level, which can be a forum for residents to share resources, knowledge, and expertise in order to achieve shared prosperity. However, the history of development in Indonesia shows that development patterns that do not involve the community in the first place actually hinder the formation of local initiatives. In the New Order era, development policies that often ignored community participation resulted in a culture of apathy among residents. As a result, people tend to wait for government direction and are rarely actively involved in determining the direction of development in their environment.

This study attempts to answer several key issues in community participation, particularly in peri-urban areas. The questions raised include: how is community participation in planning and identifying collective needs, how do they play a role in maintaining the sustainability of development outcomes, and to what extent do government and community institutions play a role in supporting this involvement. The purpose of this study is to understand community participation in various stages of urban development, from planning to maintenance, and to identify the roles of community empowerment institutions, government, and other community groups. Thus, it is hoped that effective strategies can be developed to increase community participation in urban planning, which will ultimately support the creation of more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable cities for all levels of society.

## Formulation of the problem

- 1. What is the condition of existing city facilities in West Nias in supporting community participation in urban planning?
- 2. What are the factors that influence the level of participation of the West Nias community in the urban planning process?
- 3. What is the role of city facilities in encouraging increased community participation in urban planning in West Nias?

## Research purposes

- 1. Analyzing the condition of city facilities available in West Nias related to support for community participation in urban planning.
- 2. Identifying factors that influence West Nias community participation in urban planning.
- Explaining the role of city facilities in encouraging increased community participation in urban planning in West Nias.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Urban planning involving community participation has become a major concern in urban planning studies. Community participation in planning not only provides input for decision makers, but also strengthens the community's sense of ownership of development and facilities in their environment. In remote areas such as West Nias, the role of city facilities is very important in encouraging this

participation, especially considering the limited access and infrastructure.

1. Community Participation in Urban Planning

The literature shows that community participation in city planning plays an important role in sustainable development. Arnstein (1969) developed a participation model consisting of various levels, ranging from non-participation to citizen power. This level of participation describes the level of community involvement in decision making. A study by Aref and Redzuan (2009) revealed that high participation in city planning can increase community satisfaction with public services and development, as well as improve the quality of life of local residents.

2. City Facilities as a Supporting Factor for Participation City facilities include various facilities and infrastructure that support community life, such as community centers, parks, transportation infrastructure, and education and health services. This literature shows that the availability and quality of city facilities play an important role in shaping community participation patterns. According to Ghani et al. (2015), adequate public facilities can encourage social interaction and increase community involvement in various public activities. In areas such as West Nias, facilities such as meeting halls or community information centers can be a place for people to discuss, plan, and convey their aspirations regarding regional development.

3. The Role of City Facilities in Increasing Community Engagement

Effective city facilities must be inclusive, accessible to all levels of society, and able to create a comfortable space for participation. According to Gehl (2010), well-designed public spaces can invite residents to actively participate in community activities. In remote areas, challenges in accessibility and availability of information are often barriers to community participation. However, with the right facilities, these barriers can be minimized. A study by Damanik (2018) shows that the provision of village information centers or meeting halls in rural areas can increase community awareness and participation in various development programs.

4. Case Study of West Nias: Challenges and Opportunities West Nias, as an archipelago with geographical challenges and limited infrastructure, requires a special strategy to increase community participation. According to Tarigan (2020), city facilities in remote areas such as West Nias are often inadequate, and this limits community interaction in public activities. On the other hand, local initiatives such as community-based sustainable development programs can increase local community involvement, especially if supported by adequate facilities. Several studies have shown that approaches that involve the community in planning these facilities, such as city parks or cultural centers, can increase residents' sense of ownership and responsibility for development outcomes.

Overall, city facilities have a very important role in encouraging community participation in urban planning, especially in remote areas such as West Nias. By providing inclusive and easily accessible facilities, the community can be more encouraged to participate in planning, implementing, and monitoring development. Collaboration between local governments and communities in planning these facilities is

also an important key to achieving sustainable urban planning that is responsive to local needs.

## III. METHOD

The approach in this study uses a qualitative descriptive methodology. The selection of a qualitative approach is in accordance with the research theme which is descriptive in nature. The data collection procedure involves four basic types, namely observation, interviews, documents, and visual images (Creswell, 2013). The qualitative descriptive method is used to obtain secondary data through library methods or document and literature studies. Secondary data are collected from various sources, including books, theses, journals, legislation, the internet, lecture materials, and mass media. Meanwhile, primary data are obtained through in-depth interviews with sources who are experts or related officials who have competence in the field that is the focus of the research, namely transportation.

Data analysis was carried out descriptively with a thematic approach which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

#### **Result And Discussion**

1. The condition of city facilities available in West Nias is related to support for community participation in urban planning.

Table: Indicators, Community Participation and Availability of City Facilities

No	Dimensions	Variables	Indicator	Explanation
1	Community Participation	Thought	- Ideas- Opinions	Communities engage in activities that contribute ideas, understanding, opinions and experiences.
		Power	- Following improvements in RTH management - Following voluntary participation in RTH management	Community participation in the improvement or management of green open spaces on a voluntary basis.
		Skill	- Providing skills for managing green open space	Providing assistance with skills for the management and development of green open spaces in city parks.
		Goods	- Donate goods and facilities	Participation by providing goods or facilities for the development of green open spaces.
		Money	- Donate money	Participation in the form of cash donations to help manage and develop green open spaces.
2	Availability of Facilities	Existing Condition Components	- Seating- Sports facilities- Lighting facilities- Play facilities- Open stage and gazebo	Fulfilling social, cultural and economic functions so that community social and cultural activities can be facilitated.
		Facility Condition	- Level of maintenance - Age/length of facility	Emphasizes the physical condition of the facility, level of maintenance, and age of the facility to maintain quality.
		Availability and Condition of Vegetation	- Type of vegetation - Level of maintenance - Regularity of plant arrangement - Presence of shade plants	Relating to ecological functions (environmental protection) and aesthetics (beauty of the park).
		Accessibility Conditions	Internal (inside the park): Footpaths- Pedestrians- Running tracks External (outside the park): Modes of transportation available- Supporting transportation infrastructure - Road network to the park	Accessibility for all groups so that city parks can be reached and used by the public.

Discussion on the condition of city facilities in West Nias needs to consider the impact of expansion that affects the structure and management of regional resources. Although the expansion of West Nias Regency aims to improve services and development, there are still a number of aspects that require serious attention so that city facilities can support community participation in urban planning. The following is an analysis of the results of the condition of city facilities available in West Nias:

# 1). Impact of Expansion on the Quality of Green Open Space (RTH)

The expansion of West Nias Regency has created new hopes in the management of green open spaces, but the reality shows that many green open spaces are not well maintained. The lack of budget and resources for the maintenance and development of green open spaces is a serious challenge. Many green open spaces that should function as social interaction and recreation spaces cannot be utilized optimally. Improving the management and arrangement of green open spaces is very important so that they can function as comfortable and attractive gathering places for the community, thereby increasing their participation in urban planning.

## 2). Availability and Maintenance of Public Facilities

After the expansion, many public facilities are still poorly maintained. Facilities such as sports facilities and community activity centers often do not meet comfort and safety standards, resulting in low public interest in using them. Budget constraints and lack of attention from local governments to maintain facilities are contributing factors. There needs to be a coordinated effort to repair and maintain public facilities so that they can function optimally, which will support community involvement in various social activities.

## 3). Accessibility Limitations

There are still many areas in West Nias that are difficult to reach, especially for vulnerable groups. Poor road infrastructure, especially in rural areas, hinders access to public facilities. This condition reduces community participation in activities related to urban planning. Therefore, increasing accessibility, both within green open spaces and to other city facilities, must be a priority. Providing efficient pedestrian paths and public transportation will greatly assist the community to actively participate in the planning and management of public spaces.

## 4). Low Community Participation

After the expansion, community participation in urban planning is still very low. Many communities are not involved in decision-making related to the management of city facilities. The lack of transparency of information and opportunities to provide input are significant obstacles. Programs that encourage participation, such as community forums and workshops, should be introduced and promoted to provide opportunities for communities to contribute to the planning and management of urban spaces. This involvement is important to ensure that community needs and aspirations are well accommodated.

## 5). Condition of Transportation Infrastructure

Transportation infrastructure in West Nias still needs a lot of improvement. Poorly maintained roads and the lack of efficient public transportation hinder community mobility. Difficulty in reaching health facilities, education, and economic centers reduces community participation in various aspects of life. Therefore, improving road conditions and developing a better transportation system must be a priority. With better access, people will be more encouraged to use city facilities and participate in urban planning.

The condition of urban facilities in West Nias after the expansion shows significant challenges in supporting community participation in urban planning. There needs to be more attention from the local government to improve the quality of green open spaces, improve public facilities, encourage increase accessibility, and community participation. With the right steps, West Nias can develop a more inclusive and sustainable urban environment, and improve the quality of life of its people. The results of this analysis are expected to be the basis for formulating better policies and development strategies for city infrastructure in West Nias.

# 2. Factors influencing West Nias community participation in urban planning.

The level of community participation in West Nias in the urban planning process is influenced by various interrelated factors. Here are some of the main factors that influence community participation in this context:

## 1). Access to Information

Lack of access to information on urban planning and ongoing development programs is one of the obstacles to community participation. The community needs to have a clear understanding of the planning process, as well as the benefits and impacts of the policies taken. Transparent and easily accessible information can increase community awareness and involvement.

## 2). Availability of Participatory Forums

Having a forum or platform for participation, such as a community meeting, workshop, or public dialogue, is essential to encourage community involvement in the planning process. When people have the opportunity to express their opinions and input, they will feel more responsible for the environment in which they live.

# 3). Quality of Public Facilities

The condition and quality of public facilities, including green open spaces, transportation infrastructure, and social facilities, affect people's interest in participating. Comfortable, safe, and well-maintained facilities will attract people to use and participate in activities related to urban planning.

## 4). Education and Public Awareness

The level of education and public awareness of their rights and obligations in urban planning also affect participation. People who have knowledge about urban planning tend to be more active in voicing their opinions and contributing to decision-making.

## 5). Government and Stakeholder Involvement

The support and involvement of government and other stakeholders in the urban planning process greatly influences community participation. When the government shows a commitment to involving the community and listening to their input, it will encourage more people to get involved.

## 6). Local Culture

Community culture and social norms also influence participation. In some communities, participation in decision-making processes may be considered unconventional, or there may be a fear of public speaking. Building a participatory culture that values community input is essential to increasing engagement.

## 7). Economic Conditions

A community's economic level can affect participation. Communities in difficult economic circumstances may not have the time or resources to engage in urban planning. Therefore, creating programs that take into account the community's economic conditions can increase participation.

#### 8). Trust in the Government

Public trust in government and the planning process also plays a key role. If people feel that their voices are not heard or ignored, they are less likely to participate. Building trust through transparency and accountability is essential to increasing participation.

These factors interact with each other and can affect the level of community participation in urban planning in West Nias. To increase participation, it is important for the government and stakeholders to understand and address these factors comprehensively, creating an environment that supports active community participation in decision-making related to their urban environment.

3. The role of city facilities in encouraging increased community participation in urban planning in West Nias.

Urban facilities play a very important role in encouraging increased community participation in urban planning in West Nias. The existence of green open spaces (RTH), public facilities, and adequate infrastructure can create a conducive environment for social interaction and community involvement. Well-maintained green open spaces equipped with facilities such as seating, play areas, and sports facilities not only provide a place to gather, but also encourage people to participate in community activities and dialogues on urban planning. In addition, quality public facilities, such as community activity centers and comfortable pedestrian paths, facilitate access and mobility, so that people can be more easily involved in the planning process. By providing a forum for the community to contribute, either through input, suggestions, or participation in planning activities, urban facilities help build a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the urban environment. The availability of user-friendly and attractive facilities can increase community interest in being actively involved, which in turn will strengthen local democracy and improve the quality of decisions in urban planning. Therefore, investment in the development and maintenance of good urban facilities in West Nias is very necessary to encourage higher community participation in the planning and management of their environment.

City facilities that support public activities such as festivals, community meetings, and planning workshops also serve as platforms for increasing community participation. By holding these events in public spaces, the community is given the opportunity to meet, discuss, and share ideas related to city development. For example, if a local government holds a forum or public consultation in a well-maintained city park,

the community will be more motivated to attend and voice their opinions. In addition, by paying attention to the design and aesthetics of facilities, the urban environment can be made more attractive, so that the community feels more comfortable to visit and participate.

Accessibility is also a key factor in supporting community participation. City facilities that are accessible to all age groups, including children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly, will ensure that all levels of society have equal opportunities to engage. Therefore, it is important for local governments to design infrastructure that is friendly to people with disabilities and ensure good access routes to public facilities. When everyone feels that they can easily access city facilities, the desire to participate in the planning and management of the urban environment will increase.

Finally, good urban facilities not only support community participation but also contribute to improving the overall quality of life. By providing safe, comfortable and enjoyable spaces, people will feel more connected to their environment. This creates a strong sense of community, where individuals feel valued and heard in the decision-making processes that affect their daily lives. Thus, the development and maintenance of effective urban facilities in West Nias is not only about providing physical infrastructure, but also about building a more active and empowered community in planning for their future.

### IV. CONCLUSION

The condition of city facilities in West Nias plays an important role in encouraging community participation in urban planning. Although the expansion of West Nias Regency aims to improve services and development, the challenges faced in the management and maintenance of public facilities are quite large. The impact of the expansion brings new hope in the management of green open spaces (RTH), but many RTH are poorly maintained, reducing their potential as places for social interaction and recreation. Better maintenance and management of RTH are needed so that these spaces can attract community participation. In addition, the availability and maintenance of public facilities are still minimal, which has an impact on public interest in using them. Many public facilities are poorly maintained and do not meet comfort standards, so repairing and maintaining these public facilities must be a priority in order to support community involvement in social activities. Another obstacle is the limited accessibility caused by poor road infrastructure, especially for vulnerable groups. Improved accessibility and better transportation infrastructure are needed so that the community can easily access city facilities.

The lack of community participation in urban planning is caused by the lack of transparency of information and opportunities to provide input. Therefore, programs that increase participation, such as community forums and workshops, are needed to encourage community involvement in the planning process. In addition, there are several other factors that influence community participation, such as access to information, availability of participatory forums, quality of public facilities, education, and trust in government. Understanding and addressing these factors comprehensively will greatly help increase participation.

Overall, good urban facilities not only support community participation but also contribute to improving the overall quality of life. Therefore, it is important for local governments

to invest in the development and maintenance of urban facilities that are user-friendly, attractive, and accessible to all levels of society. With the right steps, West Nias can create a more inclusive and sustainable urban environment, and improve the quality of life of its people through active involvement in the planning and management of public spaces.

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