



Implementation of the Rasailah Daku Program According to Street Children Beneficiaries

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Street Children, Social Programs, Empowerment

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This study aims to determine the implementation of the Rasailah Daku program from the perspective of street children as beneficiaries, particularly in improving their psychosocial well-being and independence. The research method used was qualitative with a descriptive approach. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation of street children participating in the program and field facilitators. The results show that the Rasailah Daku program has a positive impact on increasing street children's self-confidence, self-awareness, and social skills. However, limited resources and continuity of support remain major challenges in achieving optimal results. The implications of this study highlight the importance of strengthening the capacity of facilitators, cross-sectoral support, and developing sustainable policies to ensure similar programs can provide long-term benefits for street children.

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of street children is a complex and ongoing social problem in several major cities in Indonesia (Hung, 2024; Thamrin et al., 2023). Theoretically, various policies have been formulated by the government to address this issue, such as those stipulated in Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, which affirms children's rights to physical, mental, spiritual, and social protection (Parton, 2022; Spence, 2021). At the regional level, the Padang City Government has issued Regional Regulation Number 1 of 2012 and Mayoral Regulation Number 41 of 2017 concerning the Development of Street Children. However, the facts on the ground show a gap between theory and reality. The Rasailah Daku (Embrace, Love, Train with Integrated Education) program, which has been running since 2017, has only been able to support around 15–25 children per year, while the phenomenon of street children remains

widespread. Data from the Padang City Social Service (2025) and local media reports indicate that 25 street children were still caught in operations in less than a week. This demonstrates that the theoretically well-designed policy has not been fully effective in practice. Therefore, it is important to conduct an in-depth study to understand the implementation of the program from the perspective of the beneficiaries, namely the street children themselves. The following is data on the number of street children in Padang City from 2015 to 2024.

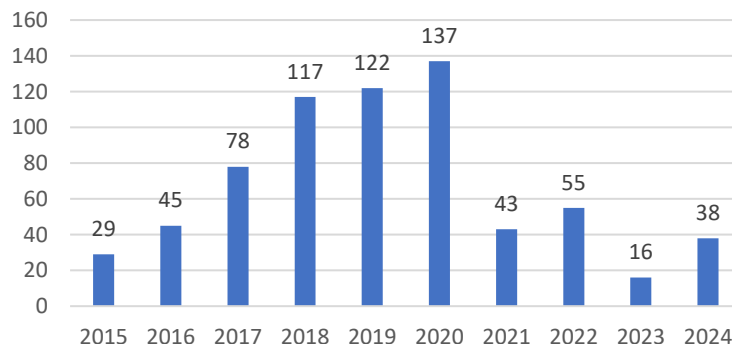


Figure 1. Data on the Number of Street Children in Padang City from 2015 to 2024

(Source: Padang City Social Services, 2025)

Real-world conditions demonstrate that the implementation of the Rasailah Daku program faces various challenges, particularly in terms of continuity, reach, and effectiveness of mentoring. Budget and resource limitations have prevented the program from being implemented consistently; for example, in 2021 and 2023, the program was temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When it resumed in 2022 and 2024, the mentoring duration was shortened from two weeks to six days, and follow-up activities such as screen-printing skills training, flower arrangement making, or barbershops were not always implemented. Furthermore, the lack of post-mentoring supervision has led some children to return to the streets. The minimal involvement of families and social groups in supervision also exacerbates this situation (Hillman, 2023; Masdul et al., 2024). These conditions illustrate that, despite the program's good intentions, its effectiveness in creating sustainable change for street children remains low (Geovani et al., 2021). This reinforces the need to evaluate program implementation based on street children's own experiences, so that program implementation is more aligned with their needs and social realities.

Several previous studies have addressed the issue of street children and mentoring program implementation, but most have focused on the perspective of implementing agencies or the government. Street children's activities in public

spaces and the economic factors behind them, while emphasized the importance of rehabilitative and educational approaches in the social development of street children (Arief et al., 2022; Karyono et al., 2023). However, research specifically examining the implementation of the Rasailah Daku program from the perspective of street children in Padang City is still very limited. The success of a social program can be measured not only by administrative achievements or technical implementation, but also by the subjective experiences of beneficiaries. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by presenting the voices of street children as those who directly experience the program's impact, thus gaining a more holistic understanding of the successes and challenges of implementation in the field.

The novelty of this research lies in its analytical focus, which focuses on street children's experiences and perceptions of the implementation of the Rasailah Daku program. Most previous studies assess program effectiveness from the perspective of government planning and implementation, but few have addressed children's personal experiences as an indicator of program success. By exploring street children's perceptions, this study hopes to assess the extent to which the mental, spiritual, and psychological development within the program truly impacts changes in their behavior, motivation, and independence. This approach also has the potential to uncover social and emotional factors that may be overlooked by program implementers, such as family support, social stigma, or unmet basic needs of children. Thus, this study offers a novel contribution to the development of a more humanistic and sustainable beneficiary-based social policy evaluation model.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the implementation of the Rasailah Daku program according to street children as beneficiaries in Padang City. Through their perspectives, this study aims to answer the main question: How do street children assess the implementation, impact, and sustainability of the Rasailah Daku program they participate in? This question is crucial for understanding the extent to which the program meets the real needs of street children in their efforts to escape street life. The study's tentative argument is that program effectiveness is determined not only by the policies and guidance methods designed by the government, but also by the extent to which the program comprehensively addresses the emotional, social, and economic needs of street children. By understanding the direct experiences of children as beneficiaries, it is hoped that the results of this study can provide a basis for improving the implementation of future social policies, particularly in the context of addressing street children in Padang City and other regions in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative study using descriptive methods. Qualitative research is a research approach that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior (Duckett, 2021). This approach aims to deeply understand the meaning of an event, symptom, or phenomenon occurring in the research subjects. Therefore, this study seeks to thoroughly describe the conditions and experiences of informants in a natural context without any manipulation of variables.

This research was conducted at the Padang City Social Service as the primary data collection site. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which determines informants based on specific considerations in accordance with the research objectives. The informants in this study consisted of five street children who are alumni of the Rasailah Daku program, the Head of the Social Rehabilitation Division of the Padang City Social Service, a Policy Analyst in the Social Rehabilitation Sector, and a First Expert Social Worker of the Padang City Social Service. This selection of informants was carried out to ensure the data obtained was relevant and able to provide a comprehensive picture of the program's implementation.

Data collection techniques in this study included interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to obtain direct information from informants regarding their experiences, views, and perceptions. Observations were conducted to directly observe conditions and activities related to program implementation and the behavior of informants. Furthermore, documentation was used to collect supporting data, such as archives, activity reports, and photographs related to the research (Stanley, 2023).

The collected data was then analyzed using the data analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman (Nasri, 2023). This analysis includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction involves selecting, focusing on, and simplifying raw data relevant to the research focus. Next, the reduced data is presented in narrative form to facilitate researchers' understanding of patterns and relationships between variables. The final stage is drawing conclusions, in which researchers formulate findings that illustrate the meaning of the analyzed data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Policy Appropriateness

Policy appropriateness is measured by three indicators: the extent to which the policy or program resolves existing problems, whether the policy aligns with the nature of the problem, and whether the policy is implemented by an institution with the appropriate authority.

In terms of institutions, the "Rasailah Daku" program has been appropriately implemented by the Padang City Social Service, specifically the Social Rehabilitation Division, which has the main duties and functions of handling street children. As stipulated in Mayoral Regulation Number 52 of 2022, it assists the Mayor in carrying out government affairs in the social sector, and specifically the Social Rehabilitation Division, which has the function of implementing policies in the field of social rehabilitation, including for street children.

Regarding whether the policy can resolve existing problems, the findings indicate that the benefits experienced by street children are temporary, such as regular meals and sleep. Street children do not experience sustainable benefits. As stated by R (15 years old), he stated:

"There, meals are regular, whereas on the streets, you have to find your own food. Sometimes, when you come home, your parents aren't home from work, so there's no food. There's a schedule for sleeping; waking up in the morning requires morning prayer. There's also a schedule for sleeping at night" (interview, September 2, 2025).

Regarding whether the policy aligns with the nature of the problem, it appears that the Rasailah Daku program hasn't been designed to address these characteristics. This is evident in the street children's poor understanding of the non-physical material provided, as they tend to be weak at grasping theoretical guidance. As L (15 years old) stated:

"I don't understand when I'm given lessons like that. I don't understand. Besides, I'm forced to participate because my mom forces me to. But I can still follow military training, even though it's difficult" (interview, September 2, 2025).

This means that the provision of guidance during the Rasailah Daku program is not in accordance with the character of children who tend to be weak in understanding theory, so that street children do not fully understand the value of the Rasailah Daku program and this results in the goal of social rehabilitation to shape the attitudes and behavior of street children in accordance with the norms that apply in society has not been achieved optimally.

In this context, the provision of coaching materials in the Rasailah Daku program should be designed according to the characteristics of street children so that they can understand the program's objectives. The delivery of coaching material in the Rasailah Daku program is not appropriate to the child's condition and abilities, so that the objectives of the Rasailah Daku program are not achieved optimally.

Accuracy of Implementation

The accuracy of implementation is seen from the cooperation between policy implementers, namely regional agencies or related institutions because a policy is not only carried out by the government as the policy implementer, so that the implementation of the policy or program can run optimally. The implementation of the Rasailah Daku program at the Padang City Social Service is carried out in accordance with the established Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) (see Figure 2). In addition, the Padang City Social Service also coordinates with other agencies, such as the 133rd Infantry Battalion/Yudha Sakti, the Padang City Civil Service Police Unit, and the Child Welfare Institution (LKSA) or Orphanages in Padang City.

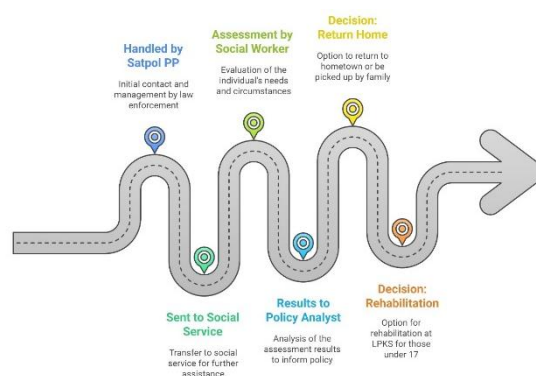


Figure 2. Padang City Social Services Standard Operating Procedures for Handling Street Children

(Source: Padang City Social Services, 2025)

The Rasailah Daku program has not been fully implemented optimally. The Padang City Social Service does provide education during the assessment and data collection process to street children and their families regarding the wrongdoing of street activities. However, most street children participate in the Rasailah Daku program not of their own free will, but rather due to pressure from their parents and the promise of financial rewards. L (15 years old) explained:

"I used to clean car windows at the traffic light near here. It was enough to buy food and pocket money. Because my mother knew an employee at the Social Service, she offered me a place to participate in the Battalion's training. I didn't want to, but because my mother gave me Rp 600,000, I was forced to go with her" (interview, September 2, 2025).

The Rasailah Daku program itself relies heavily on the facilities of the 133rd Infantry Battalion/Yudha Sakti. This is because the Padang City Social Service does not have a halfway house that can be used as a rehabilitation center for street children. Meanwhile, street children feel uncomfortable with the

sleeping conditions during the training. Interviews revealed that most street children complained about the discomfort of sleeping in the training due to the heat, stuffiness, and the fact that they were only given thin bedding.

Furthermore, street children's interest in participating in further training or skills training remains low. Furthermore, the Padang City Social Services Department is unable to require all children to participate in training due to budget constraints, which means they cannot accommodate all children for skills training. This situation is exacerbated by the lack of a post-training monitoring mechanism. The Social Services Department lacks a system for ongoing monitoring of street children who have participated in the Rasailah Daku program. This results in street children who have been trained returning to the streets. Interviews indicate that five street children tend to return to street activities. One of them, N (16 years old), said:

"After I was sent home, I wasn't visited again. I gave my cell phone number, but I never contacted them. Now I help my mom at home. Sometimes I come back if I need to buy something. Sometimes I come along if my friends invite me" (interview, September 17, 2025).

Target Accuracy

Target accuracy is measured by several sub-indicators: whether the intervention targets are aligned with the plan, whether the intervention targets are capable, and whether the interventions to implement the policy are new or a renewal of previous policy implementation. Targeting in the Rasailah Daku program is carried out through a selection process during an assessment by the Padang City Social Service. During this assessment, street children are selected based on criteria previously established by the Padang City Social Service. This selection process ensures that those participating are truly street children in need of social rehabilitation. Interviews revealed that street children, as beneficiaries, exhibited positive responses, feeling happy to be appreciated and cared for during the program. As expressed by I (16 years old), who felt appreciated and cared for by Rasailah Daku officers, he said:

"While I was there, I was appreciated and cared for. Meals were never late. The officers were all nice, though sometimes some got angry if we were late, perhaps because they were in the military. Earning money on the streets is much harder, so I'm used to it" (interview, September 14, 2025).

This indicates that the street children targeted by the program are receiving intervention well and are ready for development, as they have demonstrated positive acceptance during the program. Furthermore, the Rasailah Daku program implements Padang Mayoral Regulation Number 41 of

2017 concerning the Development of Street Children, which is a derivative of Regional Regulation Number 1 of 2012 concerning the Development of Street Children, Vagrants, Beggars, Buskers, and Street Vendors. The Rasailah Daku program, as a rehabilitation effort, was implemented due to the continued increase in the number of street children despite preventive and repressive efforts. Therefore, it can be said that the Rasailah Daku program is not a new policy but rather aims to maximize the implementation of existing policies.

Environmental Appropriateness

Environmental appropriateness consists of two main factors that shape environmental appropriateness: the policy environment and the external environment. The first is the policy environment, which encompasses the relationship between policy-making and implementing institutions and other relevant institutions. In this case, the coordination of the Padang City Social Service with other relevant agencies is evident in the regular coordination meetings, both in person and online. Furthermore, the Padang City Social Service coordinates with the Social Pillars in each sub-district to supervise children who are residents of each sub-district. Furthermore, the Padang City Social Service also receives all public complaints, including those related to street children, through the Padang City Social Service website.

Externally, this is evident in the support of street children's families and the community. Coordination between the Padang City Social Service and street children's families is not well-established, resulting in low parental supervision of their children. Consequently, after participating in the Rasailah Daku program, street children often return to the streets. Interviews with street children revealed that their parents are aware of their street activities. This is as stated by R (15 years old):

"My parents know about my car windows. Sometimes my parents don't come home from work, so there's no food. There are friends on the street, so I can eat with them" (interview, September 2, 2025).

In this regard, the Padang City Social Service is working to promote this by installing billboards that read "Stop Exploitation of Children on the Street!" at several traffic points in Padang City, especially along Jalan By Pass, which can be seen in the following image:



Figure 3. Billboard Prohibiting Child Exploitation on the Bypass

(Source: Padang City Social Services, 2025)

Furthermore, public awareness of the prohibition against giving money to street children remains low. This is despite Article 17 paragraph 2 letter c of Padang City Regional Regulation Number 1 of 2025 prohibiting giving money and/or goods to buskers, beggars, vagrants, and/or vehicle cleaners on the street. Therefore, public education is still needed to discourage giving money to street children to support the success of the Rasailah Daku program.

DISCUSSION

In analyzing the implementation of the Rasailah Daku program according to the street children who receive it, Richard E. Matland's (1995) policy implementation indicators, which assess successful implementation through four indicators of appropriateness: policy appropriateness, implementation appropriateness, target appropriateness, and environmental appropriateness, are used. Policy suitability is measured by the extent to which the policy addresses the problems faced by street children (Atilis et al., 2021; Papadopoulos, 2021). This includes the program's ability to provide concrete solutions to the social issues underlying the policy, as well as whether the policy is designed to reflect the nature and characteristics of the problem it seeks to address.

Policy appropriateness is measured by the extent to which the policy solves the problem, its suitability to the nature of the problem, and its implementation by the authorized institution (Endarwati et al., 2023; Fu et al., 2022). In this context, the Rasailah Daku program is institutionally appropriate because it is implemented by the Padang City Social Service through the Social Rehabilitation Division, in accordance with its duties and functions as stipulated in Mayoral Regulation No. 52 of 2022. However, in terms of substance, this policy has not been able to sustainably resolve the problem of street children because the benefits experienced by the children are more temporary, such as regular meals and sleep. This indicates that the policy has not had a positive long-term

impact. A well-implemented policy should be able to produce real changes to the problems faced.

Furthermore, the policy content has not been formulated according to the characteristics of street children as beneficiaries. Children's low understanding of non-physical materials indicates that the development method is not aligned with the abilities and needs of the target group. However, the behavior of the target group influences the success of implementation, depending on the alignment of policy content with the characteristics and expectations of the target group (Engidaw, 2022; Psaki et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the aspect of implementation accuracy is seen in the extent to which cooperation between implementing agencies is effective so that implementation can achieve the planned objectives (Alowais et al., 2023; Susetyo et al., 2022). The implementation of the Rasailah Daku Program has followed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and involved coordination with various agencies. However, its implementation has not been optimal due to the street children's low understanding of the program's objectives. Most participate in the program not of their own free will, but due to coercion or financial incentives. This demonstrates weak policy communication to the target group, as explained, who argues that successful implementation depends heavily on clear communication between policymakers, implementers, and beneficiaries.

Furthermore, limited facilities and infrastructure have made the Social Services Department rely on inadequate Battalion facilities. Budgetary constraints also hinder the ability to require all street children to participate in follow-up counselling (Vasylevska et al., 2024). This lack of resources hampers implementation, as Van Meter and Van Horn emphasize that resource availability plays a crucial role in the success of policy implementation.

The absence of a post-counseling monitoring mechanism has led some children to return to the streets, indicating that the program's goal of restoring children's social functioning has not been achieved. This situation indicates that the implementation of the Rasailah Daku Program has not had a tangible impact on changing the behavior of the target group, who explains that the success of policy implementation is assessed by the extent to which the policy produces tangible changes in the target group (Emmanuel & Paul, 2023; Hotman, 2024).

Target accuracy is assessed by assessing the alignment of targets with planning, the readiness of beneficiaries, and whether the policy is new or an improvement (Alotaibi, 2022; Dharmasraya, 2024). In the Rasailah Daku program, target determination is carried out through an assessment stage by the Padang City Social Service to ensure that the children being mentored are truly street children in need of social rehabilitation. In terms of target readiness, street children demonstrated positive acceptance of the program because they felt

cared for and appreciated. The implementers who behave well mean they will implement policies as intended, thus ensuring successful implementation (Asih et al., 2022; Hamengkubuwono, 2022; Purwanto & Wafa, 2023). Within the framework of successful policy implementation, the aspect of whether the program is implemented from a new policy into an update (Matland in Kadji, 2015) is evident. It is not a new policy but rather an effort to maximize the implementation of existing policies.

Environmental accuracy encompasses two aspects: the internal environment and the external environment (You et al., 2023). Internally, the implementation of the Rasailah Daku program demonstrates good coordination between the Padang City Social Service and related agencies through regular meetings, both in person and online, as well as collaboration with the Social Pillars in each sub-district. The public can also report complaints related to street children through the Social Service website. However, externally, family and community support remains low. Parents do not adequately supervise their children after counseling, resulting in them returning to the streets. Meanwhile, the community still frequently gives money to street children, despite being prohibited by Padang City Regional Regulation Number 1 of 2012.

The Social Service has attempted to address this by installing billboards displaying the slogan "Stop Exploiting Children on the Street!", but public awareness remains weak. Thus, while internal coordination has been good, external support has been suboptimal, hampering the program's continued success. Furthermore, public awareness of the prohibition on giving money to street children remains low. This is despite being regulated in Article 17 paragraph 2 letter c of Padang City Regional Regulation Number 1 of 2025, which prohibits giving money or goods to street children. So, education is still needed for the community not to give money to street children in order to support the success of the Rasailah Daku program.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion above, the implementation of the Rasailah Daku program, according to the street children who receive it, has not been optimal. Although the program is run by authorized agencies and in accordance with standard operating procedures (SOPs), the program has not been able to resolve their problems. This is evident in the fact that street children only experience temporary benefits such as regular meals and sleep, and the lack of skills training or coaching that can provide sustainable benefits. The material provided is also difficult for street children to understand. This situation is exacerbated by the lack of post-training supervision by the Padang City Social Service, which tends to lead street children back to street activities. The

implementation of the Rasaiah Daku program, according to street children, is still not optimal. Of these four aspects, three aspects still face implementation problems: policy accuracy, implementation accuracy, and environmental accuracy.

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