

Cross-Sector Learning for Education Policy Implementation from the Case of P4GN Policy in Lampung Province

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia's zoning-based student admission system (Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru, PPDB) and the Merdeka Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) both promise more equitable, higher-quality outcomes, and each keeps falling short of that promise once it reaches the district level, a pattern studies of their implementation have documented repeatedly. Policy transfer, in the framework Dolowitz and Marsh developed, offers a way of drawing explicit and bounded lessons from a source case with a comparable implementation profile, and the Prevention and Eradication of Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking policy (P4GN), implemented across four districts in Lampung Province, Metro City, Way Kanan Regency, Tulang Bawang Regency, and North Lampung Regency, supplies exactly that. Looking within-case and across cases along six implementation dimensions, institutional capacity, inter-actor collaboration, the role individual actors play, political support, community participation, and local wisdom, the comparison turns up three lessons for education policy implementation at the district level. Units that had already built institutional capacity before P4GN's rollout kept pace, while the ones still building it after rollout started consistently fell behind. Inter-actor collaboration, paired with community participation, sustains a form of legitimacy that uniform national design cannot manufacture on its own. However, a six-dimension diagnostic of this kind could still shape how zoning and curriculum reform get sequenced across a district landscape as uneven as Indonesia's, giving planners a way to ask, before rollout, whether capacity, actors, political backing, and legitimacy are actually in place.

INTRODUCTION

Ministerial Regulation No. 14 of 2018 formalized the zoning-based admission system, and district-level evaluations of its rollout have piled up since, pointing in largely the same direction. In Surakarta City, Putri et al. (2025) found that most respondents accept the zoning principle as consistent with the constitutional guarantee of fair education, though implementation still runs into facility gaps between schools and thin capacity in the units that were already under-resourced before the policy arrived, with education quality settling unevenly across zones as a result. A similar shortfall turns up in Surabaya, where Ilmi & Maulidiya (2024) judged the zoning system ineffective, tracing it to government readiness that lagged behind the policy's own rollout schedule, a public-school count that never caught up with zone-level demand, and parental understanding of the mechanism thin enough to keep generating friction in the community. Pratami et al.'s (2025) review of the Kurikulum Merdeka literature for primary schools surfaces the same shape of problem. Across those studies, teachers stayed unprepared for differentiated instruction, facilities remained thin, and formative assessment was poorly understood, while the obstacle that counted most was a persistent gap between what the policy design assumes and what schools can deliver. Furthermore, none of these obstacles is specific to one region or one policy, which suggests uniform national design keeps running into uneven local capacity regardless of which reform is being rolled out, and the documents themselves cannot account for that variation.

Matland (1995) and Hill and Hupe (2002), among others, have long argued that variation in policy outcomes across sectors traces mainly to the configuration of institutional, actor-level, and social conditions surrounding implementation, an argument that holds well outside education policy too. The clarity of the policy document itself, on its own, accounts for comparatively little of that variation. Within the Indonesian education policy literature, though, little attention has gone to whether findings generated in one policy sector can be read productively into another, provided the two sectors share a comparable structural profile. Dolowitz & Marsh, (1996, 2000) formalized that possibility through the concept of policy transfer, defined as a process in which knowledge about policies, institutions, or implementation arrangements developed in one setting is used to inform policy development in another. Their framework insists that such transfer remain bounded and explicit, resting on a demonstrated structural congruence between source and target. However, surface resemblance alone is not enough for Dolowitz and Marsh, and a transfer built on it only risks what they call inappropriate transfer, a lesson that fails once it lands in a setting whose underlying conditions differ.

The source case here shares more with education policy implementation than its subject matter would initially suggest. The Prevention and Eradication of Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking policy, known in Indonesia by its acronym P4GN, is a cross-sectoral, multi-actor policy, and it depends on social legitimacy at the community level in much the same way that zoning and curriculum reform depend on parental and teacher buy-in. A comparative case study of P4GN implementation across four districts and cities in Lampung Province, Metro City,

Way Kanan Regency, Tulang Bawang Regency, and North Lampung Regency, produced a six-dimension configuration of implementation determinants. Institutional capacity, inter-actor collaboration, actor role, political support, community participation, and local wisdom together explain why the same national policy produced markedly different implementation profiles across otherwise comparable districts. That configuration serves here as the source case in a bounded policy transfer exercise. What could an education policy planner, confronting the well-documented unevenness of zoning and Kurikulum Merdeka implementation, reasonably learn from it, and, just as importantly, where does that learning reach its limit?

Five further sections carry the argument forward. The next section situates policy transfer as a methodological device, works through the documented implementation record of zoning and Kurikulum Merdeka policy, and summarizes the six-dimension framework built in the source case. From there, section three turns to method, laying out the case study design behind the source case and the lesson-drawing procedure applied to it. Section four lays out the six-dimension configuration across the four Lampung districts, tracing the structural parallels between that configuration and the education policy findings introduced above. Three transferable lessons occupy section five, taken up in turn alongside the boundaries where the transfer stops working, and section six closes with implications for how zoning and curriculum reform might be sequenced at the district level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Policy Transfer and the Limits of Cross-Sector Borrowing

Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) define policy transfer as the use, in one setting, of knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, or institutions that were built somewhere else or at an earlier time. Their later elaboration (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000) organizes the concept around guiding questions about who transfers what, from where, to whom, and under what degree of voluntary or coercive pressure. Across both formulations, Dolowitz and Marsh insist that transfer succeed only where source and target share enough structural similarity that the mechanisms responsible for an outcome in one setting have a plausible basis for operating in the other.

Applied to implementation research specifically, policy transfer offers a way of treating a well-documented source case as a diagnostic resource for a target policy domain, on the condition that the transfer names the dimensions of comparison explicitly. P4GN implementation and education policy implementation converge structurally in ways this analysis establishes before drawing any lesson from one for the other. Cross-sector coordination drives both, local actors carry much of the weight in both, and community-level legitimacy determines whether either one holds together in practice.

Persistent Unevenness in Indonesian Education Policy Implementation

Indonesia introduced the zoning-based admission system to correct a longstanding pattern in which admission by academic score concentrated

capable students and better facilities in a small number of favored schools, leaving the remainder of the system chronically under-resourced. Several years into implementation, evaluations suggest the policy has closed that gap only partially. In Surakarta City, Putri et al. (2025) report that most respondents accept zoning as consistent with the constitutional right to education. Facilities still sit unevenly between schools there, though, and capacity remains thin at the units that were already under-resourced, so that quality across zones has never caught up, and geographic proximity now determines access without necessarily equalizing what that access provides. Surabaya presents a more unfavorable picture. There, Ilmi & Maulidiya (2024) trace the shortfall to a plain enrollment mismatch, namely a public-school count that never caught up with zone-level demand. Alongside that, facility distribution stayed just as uneven, and parental understanding of the mechanism never really took hold, feeding the friction that has followed the policy since.

Kurikulum Merdeka reproduces much the same pattern despite having nothing to do with zoning in its actual content, and Pratami et al. (2025), synthesizing twenty studies published between 2019 and 2024, trace four recurring obstacles to its implementation at the primary school level. Among the four, teacher readiness for differentiated instruction, limited instructional facilities, and uneven understanding of formative assessment among teaching staff make up three, while the fourth, and the most consequential for the argument developed here, is a persistent gap between what the curriculum policy assumes about school capacity and what many schools can actually deliver. Over time, the same synthesis reports, schools that adapted more successfully did so through teacher professional development, collaboration between schools and their surrounding communities, and contextual integration of digital media. Local capacity and local actor initiative, that pattern suggests, are what actually distinguish schools that adapted from those that did not, and the curriculum document alone does little of that explanatory work. Together, these two nationally uniform education policies show implementation outcomes that vary by district and by school in ways neither policy anticipated in its formal design. This body of literature has not developed a systematic account of why that variation occurs, beyond attributing it to generic terms such as readiness or capacity. A structurally comparable source case, examined here through a multidimensional configuration instead of a single readiness indicator, can help close that gap.

Six Dimensions Behind Policy Implementation

Institutional capacity, in this configuration, means the practical and organizational resources an implementing agency actually has on hand to do the work. Trust, open communication, and the coordination that runs across implementing bodies make up inter-actor collaboration, the dimension that determines whether agencies work with each other or past each other. Unlike either of those, actor role distinguishes policy entrepreneurs, who drive innovation and exploit policy windows, from bridging actors, who connect fragmented networks and close structural gaps (Berardo & Scholz, 2010; Burt, 1995; Mintrom & Norman, 2009).

Matland (1995) explains why implementation outcomes vary through the interaction of two dimensions, policy ambiguity and inter-actor conflict, which combine to produce four types ranging from administrative to symbolic. The framework remains influential because it ties implementation outcomes to conditions internal to the policy process itself, though administrative compliance cannot fully account for that variation. Coleman et al. (2021) are among those pushing back on whether two dimensions can carry the explanatory weight that implementation in multi-actor, locally embedded policy environments actually needs, and the source case built around P4GN implementation in Lampung Province answers that directly, with six determinant dimensions operating beneath conflict and ambiguity.

Political support takes shape from regional leadership commitment and how officials actually allocate budgets. Community participation or the fifth dimension measured differently, in how far residents actually engage with a policy once implementation is already underway. Local wisdom, the sixth and final dimension, covers the cultural values and practices a community draws on to interpret a policy and decide whether to accept it, following the same governance logic Ansell and Gash (2008) supply for the collaboration and participation dimensions specifically. In the source case, the six-dimension configuration works as a diagnostic device. Four structurally comparable districts, all operating under one national policy, end up with four different implementation profiles because their six-dimension scores differ, not because the policy text changes from place to place. That same explanatory reach carries over into the lesson-drawing exercise ahead.

Structural Congruence Between P4GN and Education Policy

Dolowitz & Marsh (2000) insist that policy transfer rest on an explicit structural basis for comparison. Three points of congruence supply that basis here, and together they justify P4GN implementation as a legitimate source case for education policy implementation.

In Lampung, P4GN ran through narcotics agencies, police, and sub-district offices working in tandem; zoning and Kurikulum Merdeka lean on an equally wide cast, district education offices, school principals, teachers, and parents, and neither reform moves without that whole cast pulling together. Ansell and Gash (2008) describe exactly this kind of cross-sectoral dependence, outcomes hinging on inter-organizational relationships as much as on the capacity of any single implementing agency.

A uniform national regulatory instrument sets the rule in both cases, through district-level or school-level units carry out the actual execution, and their institutional capacity, actor composition, and community relationships vary considerably from one unit to the next. The same P4GN framework produced four different implementation profiles across Metro City, Way Kanan, Tulang Bawang, and North Lampung, and Putri et al. (2025) and Ilmi and Maulidiya (2024) document an almost identical pattern for zoning, where facilities and

institutional readiness differ from one school to the next even though every zone operates under the same Ministerial Regulation.

P4GN needs community members to trust and act on anti-narcotics messaging just as zoning and Kurikulum Merdeka need parents and teachers to accept and operationalize policies whose rationale is not always self-evident at the point of delivery. In Surabaya, parents who did not understand the zoning mechanism resisted it regardless of what the regulation said, a friction Ilmi and Maulidiya (2024) documented directly, and community trust proved just as decisive for whether P4GN's anti-narcotics messaging landed in Lampung.

These points of congruence do not make the two policy domains identical, and section five returns explicitly to where the comparison breaks down.

METHODS

The source case follows a multiple embedded case study design with four units of analysis in Lampung Province: Metro City, Way Kanan Regency, Tulang Bawang Regency, and North Lampung Regency. Selection of the four districts followed a purposive logic, chosen deliberately to diverge as widely as possible in drug vulnerability and institutional characteristics, since a cross-case comparison only earns its keep when the underlying cases genuinely differ from one another. Across the four districts, fieldwork rested on 40 semi-structured in-depth interviews with local government officials and National Narcotics Agency (BNN) staff at both provincial and district level. Law enforcement officers and community leaders joined civil society representatives to round out the respondent pool. Documentary analysis added a second layer, working through regional regulations and program reports alongside medium-term development plans, while field observation of implementation activities filled in the remaining detail. Throughout, Denzin and Lincoln (2018) grounded theory procedures shaped this work, set within an interpretive-constructivist paradigm, and fieldwork continued until it reached theoretical saturation.

Analysis proceeded district by district first, then moved to cross-case comparison to identify configurational patterns, before synthesizing the six determinant dimensions outlined earlier.

The lesson-drawing procedure applied to this source case follows the sequence Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) set out. The procedure starts with structural congruence between the source and target domains, the same structural-congruence test applied earlier. From there, it summarizes the empirical configuration observed in the source case, and asks where that configuration parallels the implementation problems already documented for zoning and Kurikulum Merdeka. Finally, it draws an explicit boundary between what can reasonably travel from the source case to the target domain and what cannot. This sequencing keeps the lesson-drawing exercise falsifiable. In the source case, each lesson stays tied to a specific empirical configuration. A general resemblance between two policy sectors that happen to share a reputation for being difficult to implement falls short of what licensing a lesson actually requires.

RESULTS

Configuration of the Six Dimensions Across the Four Districts

No two of the four Lampung districts arrived at comparable implementation outcomes through the same configuration of dimensions, even though all four operated under the same national P4GN framework.

Table 1. Six-Dimension Configuration Scores Across the Four Districts (Scale 1-3)

Dimension	North Lampung	Way Kanan	Tulang Bawang	Metro City
Institutional capacity	3	3	2.5	3
Inter-actor collaboration	2	3	2	3
Actor role	3	3	3	2.5
Political support	3	3	3	3
Community participation	3	2	2.5	3
Local wisdom	2	2	2	2

Sources: processed from the case fieldwork, Lampung Province, 2026.

Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2019 and a functioning rehabilitation clinic on the ground anchor institutional capacity in Metro City, one of five dimensions where the district scored strong out of the six measured. Cross-sector coordination brings the district-level narcotics agency, police, military, and sub-district offices into the same room on a routine basis, and civil servants sit for regular urine testing as part of that same institutional push. Fed directly by that same coordination, a network of recovery agents operates at the sub-district level, itself evidence of actor initiative rather than a separate development. Budget allocation held steady enough to keep political support from wavering, and neighborhood cadres and family welfare organizations, together with youth groups, carried community participation forward. Local wisdom registered as moderate, the sole dimension that did not reach a strong rating, showing up mainly through an adaptive urban form in spaces such as *Umah Peluk* and campus-based Anti-Narcotics Ambassador programs, without closing the gap with the other five.

In Way Kanan Regency, the regional head's own initiative accounts for much of the district's strong overall profile: the Anti-Narcotics Education House and a therapeutic community approach to rehabilitation both trace back to that single office. That initiative drew on institutional capacity already in place through Regional Regulation No. 7 of 2022 and a dedicated integrated task force, feeding into collaboration across the district narcotics agency, police, the civil society organization GRANAT, and higher education institutions including Universitas Lampung. Community participation registered weaker, constrained by residents' reluctance to report cases involving close social or family ties, and local wisdom remained at a supportive stage, short of formal integration into implementation.

North Lampung Regency's institutional capacity, actor role, political support, and community participation all registered as comparatively strong, while inter-actor collaboration and local wisdom lagged behind. Formal institutional and social support carried this district's implementation, distinct from the cross-sector coordination that carried Metro City and Way Kanan Regency.

A Regent's Decree and routine allocation through the regional budget support adequate institutional capacity and political support in Tulang Bawang Regency, and the Desa Bersinar program is beginning to give community participation a more structured form. Collaboration across agencies remains in development, and much of what holds implementation together runs through a single bridging actor, the Regional Secretary, who chairs the civil society organization GRANAT while also connecting formal bureaucracy to community networks. Though it has not become a formal part of how implementation runs, local wisdom draws real support from emerging local idioms and customary practices, among them *Jaga Damar* and the phrase *Dang Ngepoy*. Compared with the other three districts, Tulang Bawang's implementation depends more heavily on that single connecting figure.

Parallels with the Education Policy Evidence

The education policy literature reviewed above lines up with the source case in several respects. Putri et al. (2025) and Ilmi and Maulidiya (2024) document facility and capacity disparities across zoned schools that resemble the same variation in institutional capacity found in the source case, firmly in place in Metro and Way Kanan, where regulation, budget, and organizational structure all held up, but only adequate, not fully consolidated, in Tulang Bawang. In both domains, administrative proximity to a policy mandate did not by itself guarantee the institutional foundation needed to carry that mandate out. The gap between curriculum policy design and school-level capacity that Pratami et al. (2025) identify as the most consequential obstacle to Kurikulum Merdeka implementation mirrors the dependency that Tulang Bawang's implementation showed on a single bridging actor in the absence of fully matured inter-agency collaboration. Pratami et al. (2025) find that schools which adapted successfully did so through teacher professional development and school-community collaboration; the source case shows an equivalent pattern in Way Kanan, where a policy entrepreneur's initiative drove implementation forward under conditions of continuing ambiguity. Finally, the low parental understanding of the zoning mechanism reported by Ilmi and Maulidiya (2024) echoes a finding in the source case that community participation and inter-actor collaboration function as a distinct legitimacy-generating mechanism, one that neither strong institutions nor a single capable actor can produce on their own. Metro's balanced strength across all six dimensions distinguished it from districts where implementation leaned on a single dimension to carry the rest.

DISCUSSION

Why Institutional Capacity Has to Come First

Metro and Way Kanan show results that the two districts with the strongest overall implementation profiles, institutional capacity had already taken hold before other dimensions were ever asked to compensate for its absence. Tulang Bawang shows what happens without that foundation, its continuing dependence on a single bridging actor tracing directly to institutional capacity that stayed adequate without ever becoming fully consolidated. Zoning and Kurikulum Merdeka follow the same logic, since the facility disparities and capacity gaps documented by Putri et al. (2025), Ilmi and Maulidiya (2024), and Pratami et al. (2025) are unlikely to resolve through policy adjustment.

Entrepreneurial and Bridging Actors Offset Resource Asymmetry

A single capable individual carried much of the weight in both Way Kanan and Tulang Bawang, though the two people did fundamentally different jobs. Way Kanan's regional head functioned as a policy entrepreneur who treated institutional weakness as an occasion for innovation, consistent with Mintrom and Norman (2009) account of entrepreneurial actors exploiting policy windows. In Tulang Bawang, the Regional Secretary performed a structurally different function, closing gaps between fragmented institutions as a bridging actor in Burt's (1995) sense. Pratami et al.'s (2025) finding that teacher professional development and school-community collaboration distinguished schools that adapted well from those that did not suggests that individual teachers and school principals may perform an equivalent entrepreneurial or bridging function within Kurikulum Merdeka implementation. Education policy planning could benefit from identifying and supporting these actors deliberately, since successful adaptation currently appears to depend on individual initiative that goes unrecognized and unsupported.

Collaboration and Participation Sustain Legitimacy

Collaboration and community participation reinforced Metro's institutional capacity directly, producing an even strength across all six dimensions that the other three districts did not match. In education policy, a comparable gap shows up in the low parental awareness of the zoning mechanism that Ilmi and Maulidiya (2024) report, where the absence of sustained collaboration between schools, local government, and parents leaves a policy technically implemented but not locally understood or accepted. P4GN's community-level legitimacy came from participation channels built alongside its formal institutions. Zoning and curriculum reform likely need the same kind of ongoing parental and community engagement, not a one-time information campaign that assumes the message will simply stick.

Limits of the Transfer

These lessons travel only as far as the structural congruence established earlier permits, and the differences between the two domains deserve explicit acknowledgment. P4GN carries a law enforcement and rehabilitation dimension with no direct equivalent in education policy; the coercive instruments available to P4GN implementers are simply unavailable to school principals or district education offices. Beyond enforcement, the community-level stakeholders differ as well, since P4GN's legitimacy depends substantially on customary and

religious authority structures that operate alongside the parent-teacher relationships central to education policy delivery. Finally, the risk profile of implementation failure differs in kind. A poorly implemented P4GN program risks continued narcotics circulation and public health harm. Get zoning or curriculum policy wrong, by contrast, and the fallout looks different, inequitable access and diminished learning outcomes, serious in their own right but different enough in urgency and reversibility that the two domains cannot be treated as interchangeable. This transfer therefore carries the diagnostic logic of the six-dimension configuration and the three lessons drawn from it, while the specific instruments P4GN implementers used remain sector-specific and do not travel.

Policy Implications

For district education offices, the source case points toward a diagnostic mapping exercise, run before zoning or Kurikulum Merdeka rollout begins and built along the same six dimensions applied here, that could distinguish districts or schools where institutional capacity is the binding constraint from those where the sharper gap lies in collaboration, actor initiative, or community engagement. The entrepreneurial and bridging functions this comparison identified carry a more specific implication for the Ministry of Education, which could narrow the gap between curriculum design and school-level delivery that Pratami et al. (2025) document by identifying capable school principals and teachers and supporting them deliberately. Provincial and district governments have a broader stake in this same legitimacy mechanism, since parental and community engagement in zoning and curriculum reform deserves the same sustained institutional attention that collaborative governance scholarship already affords to policy sectors with more visible cross-sector demands (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

CONCLUSION

A source case built around a security and public health policy can yield real lessons for a policy domain, education, that shares little of its subject matter but a comparable implementation structure, at least within clearly bounded limits. The policy transfer framework developed by Dolowitz and Marsh (1996, 2000), applied to a six-dimension configuration derived from P4GN implementation across four districts in Lampung Province, produced three lessons with direct bearing on the persistent unevenness documented in zoning and Kurikulum Merdeka implementation. Before anything else, institutional capacity has to be in place. Districts need it before rollout starts, since implementation itself has no way to manufacture the capacity it depends on. Entrepreneurial and bridging actors, for their part, can offset resource asymmetries that uniform policy design cannot anticipate. Beyond that, collaboration together with community participation generates a further layer, a form of legitimacy that comes only from the two working together. Even so, the transfer reaches its limit at the point where P4GN's enforcement dimension, the distinct community authority structures behind its legitimacy, and a risk profile unlike education policy's own diverge from how zoning and curriculum reform actually get delivered. Within that boundary, the six-dimension configuration

offers district education planners a diagnostic vocabulary for a problem that readiness and capacity have not fully explained.

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