International Journal of
Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences

e-ISSN : 3026-0892
p-ISSN : 3026-1422

Index: Harvard, Boston, Sydney, Dimensions, Lens, Scilit, Semantic, Google, etc

https://doi.org/10.58578/IJHESS.v3i3.7932

Lessons Learned from Policy Changes in the Poverty Alleviation Program in Jeneponto Regency, South Sulawesi Province

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Article Info:

Submitted:	Revised:	Accepted:	Published:
Sep 15, 2025	Oct 26, 2025	Nov 9, 2025	Nov 14, 2025

Abstract

This study analyzes the policy learning processes underlying poverty alleviation policy changes in Jeneponto Regency, South Sulawesi Province. With a poverty rate of 13.06%—representing approximately 49,700 individuals in 2023—Jeneponto requires a policy framework that moves beyond charitable interventions toward strategies grounded in empowerment and institutional learning. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis, and were processed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, encompassing data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that poverty alleviation policy changes in Jeneponto are not limited to technical or administrative adjustments but emerge from an iterative policy learning process. This approach has contributed to a modest reduction in the poverty rate from 13.26% in 2022 to 13.06% in 2023. While the decrease is incremental, it signifies a shift toward more reflective, responsive, and adaptive policymaking tailored to community needs. The study concludes that policy

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learning—through institutional reflexivity and stakeholder engagement—is central to enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of regional poverty alleviation efforts. The Jeneponto government's evolving capacity for institutional and social adaptation underscores the importance of continuous learning in advancing public policy governance.

Keywords: Policy Learning; Poverty Alleviation; Policy Change; Institutional Adaptation; Jeneponto Regency

INTRODUCTION

Poverty is a complex issue faced by nearly all regions in Indonesia, including Jeneponto Regency, South Sulawesi Province. As a region with a persistently high poverty rate of 13.06 percent, or approximately 49,700 people, in 2023 (BPS, 2023), poverty alleviation efforts require strategies that are not only charitable but also oriented toward community empowerment and institutional learning. The problem of poverty in Jeneponto reflects not only low household incomes but also limited access to education, health care, and employment, as well as weak coordination between government agencies in implementing social programs. Therefore, local governments need to innovate in their policies and implementation strategies to be more effective, adaptive, and sustainable.

In the context of public policy, policy change is the result of a process of reflection on the effectiveness of previous policies. Heclo (1974) introduced the concept of policy learning, a process in which policymakers learn from past experiences—both successes and failures—to improve future policies. He argued that public policy is not solely born of political pressure but also the result of social and institutional learning processes. This process emphasizes the importance of reflection, adaptation, and adjustment to the socio-economic dynamics of society.

Policy learning theory then developed through the contributions of various policy scholars. Hall (1993) stated that policy change can occur through three levels of learning: instrumental learning (improvement of policy tools), paradigmatic learning (shifts in thinking frameworks), and social learning (changes in policy values and objectives). Meanwhile, Bennett and Howlett (1992) emphasized that policy learning is a cognitive process in which policy actors change their beliefs or behavior based on new experiences

and evidence. Thus, policy learning serves as an important foundation for examining the dynamics of change in poverty alleviation policies in the regions.

The application of this theory is relevant to the context of Jeneponto Regency, where the local government has demonstrated a shift in its approach to poverty alleviation policies. While previously focused on direct social assistance (charity-based), policies have now shifted toward an empowerment-based approach and cross-sector collaboration. This change is evident in the new policy outlined in Jeneponto Regent Decree Number 100.3.3.2/117/2025 concerning the Establishment of the Regional Poverty Alleviation Coordination Team (TKPKD). Through this forum, the local government strengthens coordination between the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), the Social Service, the Agriculture Service, the Cooperatives and MSMEs Service, and the Food Security Service in implementing poverty alleviation programs.

Furthermore, policy changes in Jeneponto demonstrate the practice of social learning, as described by Sabatier (1988), that is, social learning that occurs through interactions between policy actors. The local government learned from past failures, improved data collection mechanisms, and involved the community in verifying and validating beneficiary data through the use of the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS). These efforts represent institutional learning that strengthens evidence-based public policy governance.

Theoretically, the policy learning that occurred in Jeneponto Regency can be categorized as a form of policy-oriented learning (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993), where the local government not only improves the technical implementation of programs but also adapts to changes in the social and economic environment. This is evident in efforts to improve poverty data, integrate between agencies, and develop community empowerment strategies through labor-intensive programs and strengthening MSMEs. Thus, policy changes in Jeneponto reflect the continuous learning process that characterizes adaptive governance.

This study attempts to analyze how policy learning occurs in changes to poverty alleviation policies in Jeneponto Regency. The focus of this research is the process of adaptation, reflection, and collaboration between institutions in formulating and implementing more effective policies. Using a qualitative approach and a case study design, this research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of policy

learning concepts at the regional level and provide practical recommendations for strengthening more inclusive and sustainable poverty alleviation governance.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach and is located in Jeneponto Regency because the area is home to many small islands with relatively high poverty rates. In accordance with these objectives, this research design will employ a qualitative approach. With qualitative methods, researchers will conduct intensive studies in real-world settings. The use of a qualitative research design is based on the assumption that policy learning involves a complex mix of facts and values that are difficult to measure empirically and control as is done by quantitative researchers. This complex mix of facts and values can only be investigated more accurately using a qualitative approach, which is often recommended for postnormal science (Riccucci, 2006, 2007). Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation. The design type used in this research is a case study. Case studies are a typical qualitative research design (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2011). The data analysis technique used is Miles and Huberman. This model is designed to help researchers process qualitative data. This technique focuses on three main components: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

RESULTS

Policy changes represent a form of government adjustment to social and economic dynamics, as well as weaknesses in previous policies. In the context of regional government, policy changes can include improvements to coordination structures, implementation mechanisms, and data systems used to determine program targets. These changes are not merely administrative in nature but also reflect the government's ability to respond to real-world conditions to ensure more effective and targeted policies.

Meanwhile, according to Heclo (1974), policy learning is a process in which policymakers learn from previous policy experiences, both successes and failures, to improve future policies. Heclo stated that public policy is not solely the result of political pressure, but rather the result of social and institutional learning processes. Governments and policy actors learn to understand problems more deeply, adapt new approaches, and

improve working mechanisms deemed ineffective. In other words, policy learning emphasizes the importance of reflection and adaptation as the basis for sustainable policy change.

Based on the above concept, the changes in poverty alleviation policies in Jeneponto Regency indicate a fundamental shift in both the way the local government understands the problem of poverty and in its program implementation strategies. This change did not occur suddenly, but through a process of policy learning that took place over time as explained by Hugh Heclo (1974)—that the government learned from past experiences, from the results and weaknesses of previous policies, then adjusted the direction and instruments of policy to be more effective.

In the early stages, poverty alleviation policies in Jeneponto were still oriented towards direct social assistance (charity-based), such as the Family Hope Program (PKH) and Direct Cash Assistance (BLT). The main objective was to meet the basic needs of poor households so they could survive economically. However, in practice, this approach has not been able to significantly reduce poverty rates because it was not accompanied by improvements in targeting data and coordination between agencies. As a result, many programs were poorly targeted, overlapping, and unsustainable. Through this experience, the local government began to learn from the weaknesses in the implementation of previous policies. This learning gave rise to a change in policy direction that is more strategic and data-driven. The following is the result of an interview with HN, a staff member managing the Pangkep Regency poverty alleviation program, who stated: The local government is no longer solely focused on distributing aid, but is beginning to build a collaborative, evidence-based, and community-empowerment-oriented poverty alleviation governance system.

Based on the interview results, it can be concluded that this change is clearly visible through the policies outlined in the Jeneponto Regent's Decree No. 100.3.3.2/117/2025 concerning the Establishment of the TKPKD Coordination Team and Secretariat. Through this decree, poverty alleviation policies are directed at three main changes:

1. Institutional change – the establishment of the TKPKD as a cross-sectoral coordination forum between regional governments, villages, and communities. This represents a form of policy learning, recognizing that poverty cannot be addressed by a single agency alone, but rather through multi-actor synergy.

2. The government's data approach has shifted to using the National Socio-Economic Single Data (DTSEN) to replace sectoral data, which previously often differed between agencies. This reflects the learning that policies without accurate data are ineffective.

3. The policy orientation has shifted from direct assistance to interventions based on validation, verification, and community empowerment. The government now emphasizes the importance of village and sub-district community involvement in data validation, reflecting the social learning process Heclo outlined.

With these changes, poverty alleviation policies in Jeneponto have undergone a transformation from administrative and centralized policies to reflective, adaptive policies based on institutional learning. The following is an interview with BH regarding changes and learning from government policies in poverty alleviation programs in Pangkep Regency, which states the following: Local governments no longer merely implement national programs, but adapt them to local conditions and field evaluation results. (Interview with HN, September 2, 2025)

Based on the interview results, it is stated that this process shows that policy changes in Jeneponto are a direct result of policy learning: the government learned to understand the roots of poverty, corrected old patterns that were less effective, and restructured policy to be more responsive to community needs. Thus, this policy change not only marks an administrative adjustment, but also indicates an evolution of thinking and institutional capacity within the local government system towards more adaptive and sustainable policy governance.

In the context of the follow-up meeting to Jeneponto Regent's Decree No. 100.3.3.2/117/2025, it was apparent that the process of policy change and learning was taking place simultaneously. The meeting marked a shift in the local government's approach to poverty alleviation, from assumption-based policies to evidence-based policies. Strengthening cross-stakeholder coordination, establishing data verification and validation teams, and using the National Socioeconomic Single Data (DTSEN) are concrete examples of policy changes that emphasize the integration and accuracy of target data.

From Heclo's perspective, these steps also reflect policy learning. The Jeneponto Regency Government learned from past experiences, where inaccurate data rendered social assistance programs ineffective. Through this process, the local government shifted its approach to poverty: from simply distributing aid to systematic, data-driven, participatory,

and collaborative efforts. The involvement of village and sub-district governments, as well as community groups in data verification demonstrates a form of social learning at the local level, where policies are developed through interaction, reflection, and continuous adjustment to realities on the ground.

Thus, policy change in Jeneponto is not merely the result of administrative decisions, but also the result of an institutional learning process that strengthens the governance of poverty alleviation policies. This aligns with Heclo's theory that effective public policy is the result of a continuous learning process within the government system.

Jeneponto Regency poverty data for March 2023, which showed a figure of 13.06%, or approximately 49,700 poor residents, demonstrates the still-high socioeconomic burden facing the region. This figure serves as a crucial indicator that the policy changes and policy learning, as demonstrated in the TKPKD meeting, are not merely administrative in nature but rather a response to real needs on the ground.

This situation indicates that poverty alleviation policies in Jeneponto are in a transition phase toward a more evidence-based approach. The use of national programs such as the Family Hope Program (PKH) and direct cash assistance (BLT) are part of the macro strategy directed by the central government. However, their effectiveness at the regional level depends heavily on data quality, inter-agency coordination, and the ability of local governments to adapt implementation to the social characteristics of their communities. This is where Heclo's policy learning process appears to be at work—local governments are not simply implementing programs, but are beginning to learn to restructure data collection systems, target validation, and collaboration mechanisms so that policy interventions truly impact poverty reduction. The changes in poverty alleviation policy in Jeneponto Regency in 2023 demonstrate a policy learning process, as explained by Hugh Heclo, that public policy arises not only from political pressure but also from reflection, evaluation, and adjustment to past experiences. In this context, the Jeneponto regional government learned from the limitations of previous policies, which were deemed ineffective in reducing the poverty rate, which remains at 13.06 percent.

Through this reflection, an awareness emerged that poverty alleviation cannot be carried out sectorally or partially. Therefore, the 2023 policy direction places greater emphasis on cross-sectoral synergy and program refinement for better targeting, in line with the 2022–2023 South Sulawesi Provincial Development and Sustainability Plan

(RPKD). This step demonstrates the occurrence of a substantive policy learning process, where the regional government does not simply carry out central instructions but adjusts policies based on lessons learned from previous implementations. This learning includes how to improve beneficiary targeting mechanisms, increase budget effectiveness, and strengthen institutional systems that support program sustainability. Furthermore, a social learning process is evident, involving interactions between various policy actors. The following is an interview with a National Agency for National Development Planning (BNBN) management staff regarding government policies in implementing poverty alleviation programs, which states the following:

The local government is strengthening collaboration between the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), the Social Service, the Food Security Service, the Cooperatives and MSMEs Service, and the Agriculture Service to ensure synergy between empowerment and social protection programs. (Interview with BN, September 3, 2025). The interview revealed that this collaboration not only strengthens coordination but also creates a shared learning space between institutions to understand the complexity of poverty issues in Jeneponto. From Heclo's perspective, this form of learning reflects the social dynamics in policymaking, where dialogue and the exchange of experiences are key to improving future policies.

At the same time, institutional learning is also beginning to be evident through the strengthening of regional bureaucratic and institutional capacity. The government has established and reactivated the Regional Poverty Alleviation Coordination Team (TKPKD), improved the planning system at the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) to be more data-driven, and updated the Integrated Social Welfare Database (DTKS) to ensure accurate targeting. These efforts demonstrate the ability of government institutions to adapt and improve governance structures to make policies more responsive to changes in the socio-economic situation of the community.

Thus, policy learning in Jeneponto illustrates a shift from routine, administrative policies to reflective, adaptive policies. The local government is not only learning to implement programs but also understanding that successful poverty reduction depends on the ability to learn from experience, strengthen intersectoral coordination, and build institutional capacity capable of adapting to new challenges. In Heclo's view, this process marks progress in how the government learns to navigate politics and manage policies

more intelligently and oriented toward sustainable results. Furthermore, this policy learning is also evident. Policy learning in poverty alleviation in Jeneponto Regency in 2023 can be understood through the framework of policy learning theory proposed by Hugh Heclo (1974). Heclo views public policy not only as the result of political decisions, but also as the result of a learning process that occurs among policymakers, government institutions, and the community based on past experiences and evolving social dynamics. In the Jeneponto context, policy learning is clearly evident in the way the local government adjusts the policy direction and strategy of poverty alleviation programs through reflection, adaptation, and institutional innovation.

In 2023, the Jeneponto Regency government demonstrated substantive learning by strengthening the Regional Poverty Reduction Plan (RPKD). This document serves as the primary guideline for accelerating poverty reduction, aligning with the 2022–2023 South Sulawesi Provincial RPKD. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the poverty rate in Jeneponto remained at 13.06 percent, or approximately 49,700 people, in March 2023, indicating the need for corrective measures to previous policies and strategies. From this experience, the local government learned that effective policies require a comprehensive, measurable, and data-driven planning framework. Therefore, the RPKD is used as an institutional learning instrument to improve governance, ensure program alignment, and direct resources to the right targets.

This learning process is also evident through cross-sectoral synergy and coordination. The Jeneponto government understands that poverty is multidimensional and cannot be addressed by a single agency. Therefore, there has been a shift from a sectoral approach to a collaborative one. The Social Service, Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), Food Security Service, Agriculture Service, and Cooperatives-MSMEs Service now work synergistically under the coordination of the Regional Poverty Alleviation Coordination Team (TKPKD). This collaboration is a concrete manifestation of social learning, as Heclo explained—where learning occurs through social interaction between policy actors, the exchange of experiences, and the building of a shared perception of the best ways to address poverty.

In addition to social learning, the 2023 policy also demonstrates a form of policy learning related to policy substance and strategy. The government is sharpening program aspects and targets by strengthening the beneficiary verification system based on the

Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) to ensure that social assistance and empowerment programs truly reach the extreme poor. This refinement also includes evaluating the effectiveness of budget use and improving coordination mechanisms between implementing agencies. From previous experience, local governments have learned that inaccurate targeting and overlapping programs lead to low policy impact. Therefore, this learning drives improvements to program design to be more focused, integrated, and efficient.

On the other hand, institutional learning is evident in institutional strengthening. The local government strengthened the function of the Regional Development Planning Agency (TKPKD) as a coordinating forum, increased the capacity of its apparatus in planning and evaluation, and improved the village poverty data-based monitoring system. This process reflects institutional adaptation to new needs arising from previous implementation experiences. In Heclo's view, this is a form of advanced learning, where institutions not only adjust policies but also build internal mechanisms for continuous learning. Thus, policy learning in Jeneponto in 2023 demonstrated a transformation from administrative policies to reflective and adaptive ones. The following is an interview with a BN management staff member regarding government policy in collaboration with poverty alleviation program implementers: The local government is not only improving the technical implementation of programs, but is also learning to build a more collaborative, data-driven, and results-oriented policy system. (Interview with BN, September 3, 2025). Based on the interview results, it can be stated that within the framework of the poverty alleviation program in Pangkep district, there were policy changes that showed that the poverty alleviation process in Jeneponto had entered the policy-oriented learning stage, where past experiences, performance evaluations, and interactions between actors became the main basis for producing more effective, participatory, and sustainable policies in reducing poverty rates.

The poverty alleviation strategy implemented by the Jeneponto Regency Government in 2023 demonstrates a comprehensive and adaptive approach to the socio-economic conditions of the local community. This strategy encompasses three main pillars—institutional and data strengthening, economic and social empowerment, and community contribution and participation, which overall reflect policy learning and more targeted strategy implementation compared to previous years. The following is an interview with AA, a program management staff member regarding the poverty alleviation strategy in

Jeneponto Regency, who stated the following: In terms of institutional and data strengthening, the government regularly updates poverty data through field verification and validation. This step is crucial because accurate data is the primary basis for program planning, implementation, and evaluation. (interview with AA, September 15, 2025)

Based on the research results, it was found that one of the classic problems in social policy in Jeneponto is inaccurate targeting due to data that is not updated regularly. By strengthening the validation mechanism for beneficiary family (KPM) data and integrating the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) with regional population data, the government can ensure that social assistance reaches the truly poor. Furthermore, cross-sectoral coordination involving the Social Service, Bappeda, the Agriculture Service, and partners such as the Family Hope Program (PKH) facilitators demonstrates efforts to synchronize policies to prevent overlapping program implementation. This strategy strengthens institutions by clarifying roles, communication channels, and responsibilities between institutions. The impact is increased efficiency in aid distribution and reduced duplication of beneficiaries, which directly contributes to the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programs. In terms of economic and social empowerment, the Jeneponto Government is implementing a strategy that is more oriented towards increasing community independence. Micro-enterprise development programs are implemented in the agriculture, livestock, and fisheries sectors. The following is an interview with AA, a program management staff member regarding the community empowerment aspect of poverty alleviation in Jeneponto district, who stated the following:In order to motivate the community to carry out government programs, incentives and program support have been provided.Labor-intensive projects have been proven to create new jobs in rural areas. (interview with AA, September 15, 2025)

DISCUSSION

Based on the interviews, research findings revealed that one form of government intervention to implement this program in the medium term is not only focusing on social assistance but also on income-generating activities for the poor. Furthermore, the government ensures the availability of basic needs through more targeted social assistance distribution and expands the scope of social protection programs such as the Family Hope Program . The tangible impact of this strategy is reflected in increased purchasing power

among the poor and a reduction in extreme poverty levels in several sub districts, particularly in coastal and agricultural areas, which are the primary targets of the labor-intensive program.

The third dimension, community contribution and participation, emphasizes that poverty alleviation is not solely the responsibility of the government but also of a collective social movement. The "Gerakan Sedekah ASN" program, which collects staple foods such as rice, eggs, and canned fish, demonstrates a participatory approach based on social solidarity. Furthermore, educating the community and PKH (Family Hope Program) facilitators about data updates and the use of aid strengthens collective awareness of the importance of transparency and accountability in program implementation. This community-based approach deepens the relationship between the government and the community, fosters a sense of ownership in public policy, and strengthens social networks that underpin the program's sustainability.

Empirically, based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), these strategies are beginning to show results. The percentage of the poor in Jeneponto Regency decreased from 13.26 percent in 2022 to 13.06 percent in 2023, a decrease of approximately 0.20 percentage points. While the decrease is not yet significant, this change indicates a positive improvement and reflects the effectiveness of a more integrated strategy. This decrease is primarily due to improved targeting of social assistance and economic empowerment through labor-intensive programs and small business empowerment.

Thus, the 2023 poverty alleviation strategy in Jeneponto can be said to have evolved from a charity-based model to an empowerment-based one, where lessons learned from previous years have encouraged the government to reorganize data systems, strengthen cross-sector coordination, and build community participation. The impact has been the emergence of more efficient policy governance, more accurate aid distribution, and increased economic capacity of the poor. This process marks the occurrence of real policy learning the local government is not only implementing programs but also learning from experience, improving institutions, and creating more effective intervention patterns to reduce poverty in Jeneponto.

The poverty alleviation strategy implemented by the Jeneponto Regency Government in 2023 demonstrated progress in coordination and policy learning, but still leaves a number of challenges that need to be addressed for optimal results. In terms of

design, the strategy emphasizes cross-sector synergy, data updates, and economic empowerment. However, in its implementation, gaps remain between policy design and implementation, particularly regarding data consistency, human resource capacity, and program integration across agencies.

Strategically, the Jeneponto government has routinely updated poverty data as a basis for determining beneficiaries. This strategy is a crucial step in reducing mistargeting of aid, a factor in the low effectiveness of social programs. However, in practice, data validation still faces technical challenges, such as discrepancies between the DTKS (Disaster Mitigation Data) and village population data, as well as delays in field updates. This situation results in some poor groups remaining unregistered or unreached by the program. These shortcomings demonstrate that despite the implementation of data-driven strategies, the capacity and speed of lower-level bureaucratic systems remain a barrier.

In terms of cross-sector coordination, the government has sought to align perceptions between the Social Services Agency, the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), the Agriculture Agency, and other relevant institutions. This strategy is intended to ensure that social assistance, labor-intensive programs, and economic empowerment programs do not overlap. However, a major weakness remains the weak integrated monitoring system and cross-sector communication. Each agency tends to focus on its sectoral programs without a sustainable joint evaluation mechanism. As a result, the expected synergy has not yet fully generated a strong collective impact on poverty reduction. In this context, policy learning should not stop at the formal coordination stage, but should also include the creation of a collaborative evaluation system involving all sectors and implementing partners.

In terms of economic and social empowerment, business development strategies and labor-intensive programs have had a positive impact on creating new jobs, particularly in the agriculture and fisheries sectors. Incentive programs for farmers and fishermen have also helped increase the incomes of the poor. However, a persistent weakness is the program's suboptimal sustainability due to a lack of business mentoring and access to further capital. Many micro-enterprise groups are only active during the program's run but fail to thrive after government support ends. This indicates that economic empowerment strategies remain short-term and are not fully directed at strengthening the production and marketing capacity of the poor.

Meanwhile, in terms of community contribution and participation, the Civil Servant (ASN) charity movement and education for beneficiaries have strengthened social solidarity. However, broader community participation in program planning and evaluation remains limited. The following is an interview with ST, a program management staff member regarding the aspect of community participation in poverty alleviation in Jenepoto Regency, who stated the following: Socialization activities and village deliberation forums are often still formal and do not fully accommodate the aspirations of the poor as policy subjects (interview with AA, September 15, 2025).

Based on interviews, research findings indicate that effective community-based strategies should provide greater community involvement in oversight and decision-making. Results-wise, although the poverty rate in Jeneponto fell from 13.26 percent in 2022 to 13.06 percent in 2023, the rate of decline remains relatively slow. This indicates that the strategy is moving in the right direction but still faces structural obstacles. The main challenges lie in limited regional budgets, low institutional capacity at the subdistrict and village levels, and a weak data integration system across sectors.

To strengthen the program's effectiveness, further adaptive strategies are needed, including improving the integrated data digitization system across agencies, strengthening the human resource capacity of field implementers, and developing a more sustainability-oriented economic empowerment model. Furthermore, an evidence-based policy approach is needed, using regional evaluation and research results as the basis for decision-making. In the context of policy learning, Heclo argues, this demonstrates the need to enhance institutional learning so that the learning process occurs not only at the policy level but also institutionalized within the regional governance system.

Thus, Jeneponto's 2023 poverty alleviation strategy reflects progress in policy direction and implementation structure, but still faces challenges in terms of sustainability, implementation capacity, and system integration. The government has learned from past experiences to improve data, coordination, and empowerment, but the next phase requires deeper institutional learning capabilities to ensure poverty alleviation programs have a more tangible and sustainable impact on the Jeneponto community.

In conclusion, the 2023 poverty reduction strategy in Jeneponto Regency demonstrates progress in policy direction and implementation practices, becoming more focused and based on policy learning. The local government has successfully strengthened

its institutions by updating poverty data, building cross-sectoral coordination, and integrating various social and economic empowerment programs. This strategy demonstrates a concrete manifestation of the learning process, as explained by Heclo, where the local government learns from past experiences to improve governance, program effectiveness, and beneficiary targeting.

However, program implementation still faces several weaknesses, such as data asymmetry between agencies, weak integrated monitoring, and suboptimal sustainability of community economic empowerment programs. Community participation in program planning and evaluation also needs to be strengthened to make policies more responsive to the needs of the poor. Empirically, although the poverty rate decline from 13.26 percent to 13.06 percent is not yet significant, these results indicate a more adaptive and reflective policy direction. The government has succeeded in building an institutional foundation and improved coordination as a result of the policy learning process. The next stage requires strengthening institutional capacity at the local level, digitizing integrated data systems, and implementing a sustainable empowerment model so that the poverty alleviation strategy in Jeneponto is not merely reactive but also capable of generating sustainable socio-economic transformation for the community.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it was found that one of the classic problems in social policy in Jeneponto is inaccurate targeting due to data that is not updated regularly. By strengthening the validation mechanism for beneficiary family (KPM) data and integrating the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) with regional population data, the government can ensure that social assistance reaches the truly poor. Furthermore, cross-sectoral coordination involving the Social Service, Bappeda, the Agriculture Service, and partners such as the Family Hope Program (PKH) facilitators demonstrates efforts to synchronize policies to prevent overlapping program implementation. This strategy strengthens institutions by clarifying roles, communication channels, and responsibilities between institutions. The impact is increased efficiency in aid distribution and reduced duplication of beneficiaries, which directly contributes to the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programs. In terms of economic and social empowerment, the Jeneponto Government is implementing a strategy that is more oriented towards increasing

community independence. Micro-enterprise development programs are implemented in the agriculture, livestock, and fisheries sectors. The following is an interview with AA, a program management staff member regarding the community empowerment aspect of poverty alleviation in Jeneponto district, who stated the following:In order to motivate the community to carry out government programs, incentives and program support have been provided.Labor-intensive projects have been proven to create new jobs in rural areas. (interview with AA, September 15, 2025)

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