



# Policy on handling street children in Indonesia: conformity with the principles of the state of law and good governance

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**Abstract:** The policy in handling street children is a required aspect of the state's duty to guarantee rights for children, as mandated by the rule of law and good governance standards. The researcher has as its target measured the difference between ideal principles under the rule of law metrics such as certainty constructions, fairness equations, equitable distribution of social costs (which benefits more people than capitalism gives in general) and protection for children who are not old enough to protect themselves and the specific policies that emerge in Indonesia's traditional manner of dealing with street kids. This study also examines how public policy governance can be strengthened to be more aligned with the principles of accountability, transparency, effectiveness, institutional coordination, and responsiveness. Based on a study of various bureaucratic policies and practices at the central and regional levels, it was found that there was a discrepancy between the values that should be the basis for policy formulation and the conditions of practice in the field. The gap can be seen in the weak database, limited basic service facilities, lack of coordination across institutions, and policy orientation that tends to be reactive and unsustainable. This study recommends strengthening public policy governance through institutional integration, more consistent planning, more accurate data utilization, and the application of an approach centered on the fulfillment of children's rights to ensure policy conformity with the principles of the rule of law and good governance.

**Keywords:** Public Policy, Street Children, State of Law, Good Governance, Governance.

## 1. Introduction

Indonesia's national development is now facing a major challenge in realizing equitable social welfare in the midst of rapid global changes. The quality of governance is a determining factor for progress, especially when the community demands public services that are responsive, easily accessible, and fair (Ade Risna, 2024). *Good governance*, which in various declarations has long been inscribed into the Constitution as an essential component of public welfare, is a principle. It advocates the rule of law, information disclosure, accountability, and responsiveness (Marius Andreescu & Claudia Andreescu, 2019). However, its implementation still encounters many obstacles in the field, especially in the field of social welfare, which is directly related to vulnerable groups such as street children.

The problem of street children is a crucial issue in almost all regions, including large and medium-sized cities. Factors such as poverty, family dysfunction, limited access to education, and socio-economic pressure make many children take to the streets to meet their daily needs (Astri, 2014). This phenomenon is evident, for example, in Manado City, where hundreds of children are recorded living and working on the streets, although the local government has made various efforts, such as raids, control, and training at Learning Activity Studios. These efforts are often only temporary; Children are back on the streets after the intervention is carried out because the structural roots of the problem have not been resolved. Local government policies, including local regulations on the

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handling of homeless people and abandoned children, have not been able to ensure sustainable protection. Weak data collection, lack of facilities such as halfway houses, and budget constraints have widened the gap between policies on paper and practice on the ground (Popo et al., 2022).

In addition to these overarching tendencies, specific social, economic, and institutional obstacles significantly impede local governments' capacity to provide essential assistance to street children. Socially, there is minimal public assistance, prevalent urban poverty, rural-urban mobility, familial displacement, and community stigmas that impede children's protective access. Despite local government budget deficits and deficiencies in social welfare expenditure, as well as suboptimal investments in social welfare frameworks, integrated systems interventions in social welfare remain predominantly secondary, unsustainable, and address the issues superficially. The institutional fragmentation of the policy framework results from inadequate systems for inter- and intra-sectoral coordination, public social services, education, and legal systems, characterized by a widespread lack of reliable information, social support facilities, and standardized service delivery protocols. The convergence of these criteria significantly influences local resources for monitoring and evaluating street children, principally determining the effectiveness of programs for this demographic.

For example, when children in different cities are being helped and are simply given homes to live in or money sent directly back to their hometowns as living expenses, wherever they may be, this kind of passive support for life burdens is equal overall to the direct help and does not allow these children to gradually improve their lives through work of their own. Not only does this approach blur the different social, cultural, and Beside dynamics of each area, but its result is likewise unsatisfactory. An in-depth study in the Special Region of Yogyakarta shows that prevention and rehabilitation programs have been designed in two major forms: prevention for vulnerable children and protection for children already living on the streets. However, its implementation is still hampered by inaccurate data collection, outreach mechanisms that are not fully based on children's rights, and weak efforts to reintegrate children with families. In many cases, the mentality of children who have become accustomed to living independently on the street and in unsupportive family conditions makes it difficult for the reunification process to achieve optimal results (Afandi, 2018).

It also shows that street children are not just a result of socio-economic issues. They also reflect the absence of optimal applications for the rule of law and *good governance* philosophy in public practice. A constitutional obligation in line with the principles of child welfare stipulates: when institutions do not coordinate, when data collection lacks credibility, when policy is only partially executed, and repressed by force. Then the state can not perform well enough as a protector. Thus, efforts are needed to strengthen policy governance that is more adaptive, collaborative, and based on children's rights, while ensuring that the values of the state of law are reflected in the entire process of implementing policies for handling street children. This condition raises fundamental questions about the extent to which policies for handling street children are truly in line with legal principles, certainty of service, and the value of accountability and transparency that are measures of good governance.

The situation also shows the need to review the government's strategy to ensure that children's rights are met, especially when the various programs implemented have not yielded sustainable results. The inability of policies to prevent children from returning to the streets and the low effectiveness of reunification and social protection show that this problem is not only a technical problem of implementation, but a fundamental problem in the design of policy governance itself. Therefore, it is important to clearly identify where the normative gap is, as well as how policies can be strengthened to be more in line with the principles of the rule of law and *good governance*.

Based on this description, this study is directed to examine two main issues that are at the core of this study, namely: (1) what are the normative gaps between the ideal principles of the state of law and *good governance* and policy practices for handling street

children in Indonesia; and (2) how strengthening public policy governance can be carried out to be more in line with the values of the state of law and *good governance standards*.

## 2. Materials and Methods

In this study, a normative-qualitative approach is adopted to discuss the extent to which Indonesia's policies toward its street children are consistent with justice rule and good governance standards. The approach concentrates particularly on studying relevant statutes and legal principles. The reason why the project adopted a normative method was that its study object is whether ideal norms in Indonesia's legal system comply with public policy implementations (Marzuki, 2017).

The research data was obtained through reading actual cases and applying the related laws and regulations on all levels. This is part of a collaboration between humanities and social science scholars who are studying different facets of the law partnership theory. The research data was drawn from literature reviews including primary legal materials, such as the 1945 Constitution, the Public Service Law, Law on Child Protection, Government Administration Law, other related PP and Regional Regulations from secondary legal studies in books and periodicals. Tertiary data sources such as dictionaries or encyclopedias of law are used to consolidate one's fuller understanding of the legal concepts or principles that are being analyzed.

All of these legal materials are analyzed descriptively-qualitatively through systematic and comparative interpretation in advance to identify gaps between ideal norms and policy practices in the field. Conclusions are drawn using deductive reasoning, which involves drawing specific findings based on the general principles of the state of law and good governance, to be able to provide an objective picture of the direction of improving the policy of handling street children (Qamar et al., 2017).

This research uses three data handling processes to demonstrate its methods. The three main categories of legal data include law, regulations, and constitutional norms, empirical studies, policy reports, journal articles, and books, and encyclopedias and legal dictionaries. Second, the writers triangulate using literature review, document analysis, relevant legal cases, and contextualizing each legal norm in policy practices. Third, descriptive-qualitative methods use statutory, comparative, and systematic analysis to describe the gap between legal ideals and field practices. These Research Let us tracks how the Indonesian Regulatory Framework complies with the rule of law and good governance.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. *The Normative Gap between the Principles of the State of Law and Good Governance and Policy Practices for Handling Street Children in Indonesia.*

Legal certainty is a prerequisite for the realization of effective legal protection. When regulations provide certainty, people can be assured that their rights will be respected and protected by the state. Historically, legal protection theory has its roots in the idea of *Natural Law*, which places human beings as subjects who have natural rights. Soedjono Dirdjosisworo explained that law is present in various dimensions, ranging from the authority of the ruler, behavioral guidelines, norm systems, to a series of justice values that govern people's lives (Soedjono, 2001). This understanding confirms that the law is not only binding on the ruler, but also an ethical limit for the state's actions against citizens, including children living on the streets.

Legal protection basically aims to ensure the fulfillment of human rights (HAM) and provide guarantees that the interests of citizens are not harmed by the abuse of power (Antoro, 2024). Sudikno Mertokusumo emphasized that legal protection is an effort to realize legal certainty based on the norms that apply in society (Mertokusumo, 1986). In Satjipto Rahardjo's approach, legal protection does not stop at the normative aspect, but must bring substantive justice through humane and responsive state action (Aulia, 2018).

Operationally, legal protection consists of two forms. First, preventive legal protection, which is a preventive mechanism through regulation, education, supervision, and early intervention, so that children's rights are not violated. In the context of street children, preventive protection is realized through the provision of basic social services, family strengthening, assessment-based data collection, and policies to prevent children from taking to the streets. This approach is important considering that most street children are in *vulnerable* situations, so the state must be present before rights violations occur.

Second, the protection of repressive laws, namely law enforcement after a violation occurs, for example, through the provision of sanctions against parties who exploit, torture, or trade children. In the context of this study, repressive protection is an instrument to ensure that every violation of the rights of street children—whether by the community, the authorities, or other parties—receives a firm legal response and provides redress for the victim (Tussman & tenBroek, 1949).

These two approaches are relevant theoretical foundations for analyzing the gap between normative policies and practices in the field, especially when the handling of street children is still dominated by repressive approaches such as raids and control. Thus, legal protection theory provides a framework to assess whether government actions are consistent with the principles of the rule of law, respect for children's rights, and the principles of *good governance*.

### 3.2. *The Normative Foundation of the Principle of the State of Law*

The principle of the state of law and *good governance* has a strong constitutional basis in the Indonesian constitutional system. The mandate to "advance the public welfare" contained in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution is the moral foundation as well as the direction of state policy in organizing a government oriented towards public welfare (Juniorso & Achmad Sodik Sudrajat, 2020). The formulation is reaffirmed in Chapter XIV of the 1945 Constitution, which emphasizes the state's obligation to provide and maintain social welfare, especially for groups living in vulnerable conditions, such as the poor and abandoned children. Thus, the principle of *good governance* is not just a modern managerial concept, but has normative roots inherent in the Indonesian constitution and is integrated with the idea of the rule of law that places the protection of citizens' rights as the main mandate (Zamroni, 2019).

In the framework of *good governance*, there are several principles that function as a marker of the quality of government administration. First, the Rule of Law demands that every state policy, public institution, and administrative action be subject to a fair and non-discriminatory rule of law, thereby providing certainty and protecting the rights of the community (Rahmani & Koohshahi, 2013). Second Transparency, which emphasizes the importance of public access to government information, including decision-making processes, budget planning, and service mechanisms (Hood & Heald, 2006). This openness is important to prevent bureaucratic moral hazards and ensure that the government acts in the public interest. Third, Responsiveness, which requires every government agency to respond quickly and appropriately to the aspirations, needs, and complaints of the community (Speer, 2012). These three principles—along with the principles of accountability and effectiveness—are the standards that must be seen in the design and implementation of social policies, including policies for the treatment of street children.

Normatively, Indonesia has adopted these principles into various regulations. An example is Law No. 25 of 2009 on Public Service, which not just sets the standards needed for administrative service, but also points out that in offering government services, there is an obligation to protect individuals, families, and communities as they seek through the government's benevolence only to obtain their basic rights. This means that the legal framework for responsible and inclusive governance has been laid down at the state level. However, the *de jure* condition has not been fully realized at the *de facto* level. The awareness of the apparatus about the importance of transparent and accountable public

services is still limited, so the implementation of *good governance* is often hampered by a bureaucratic culture that tends to be procedural.

The gap between these norms and practices creates a wide social impact, especially for young people who face economic pressures and limited employment opportunities. When the state fails to provide effective services and adequate access to welfare, a crisis phenomenon emerges that pushes some youth to enter street life as a form of survival. The condition of street children in Indonesia reflects the ripple effects of socio-economic inequality and weak implementation of *good governance*. Several studies, including the opinion of Indrasari Tjandraningsih, show that street children are children who work in the urban informal sector in conditions that are very vulnerable to exploitation, violence, and harassment (Putra et al., 2015).

From the perspective of the state of law, the situation indicates that the state's obligation to ensure the protection of children's rights as part of vulnerable groups has not been fulfilled. Bad public services and government are all likely to involve children's rights and expand inequality in society (Rohmatullah et al., 2024). For this reason, *good governance* with quality of rule as its essential foundation becomes an important choice in judging whether handling street children is in line with constitutional stipulations and good governance principles.

### **3.3. The Principle of Good Governance in Public Policy**

In the context of public policy, *good governance* is understood as governance that ensures the administration of the state in an accountable, transparent, responsive, and fair manner (Devaney, 2016). The government is no longer the only dominant actor, but rather acts as a facilitator that creates a conducive environment for the community to participate and supervise the performance of the state. This principle demands a realignment of the role of the government and society, especially in ensuring that social policies truly reach vulnerable groups such as street children.

According to the UNDP framework, *good governance* includes elements of public engagement, information disclosure, law enforcement, service effectiveness, equitable distribution of resources, and policy priorities that are prepared based on the needs of the community, including the poor and vulnerable. The State Administration Institution also formulated nine aspects of good governance—ranging from participation, transparency, responsiveness, accountability, to strategic vision—which are the benchmarks for the implementation of modern governance.

These principles have direct implications for policies for handling street children. Effective social services can only be realized if the government provides open information, establishes cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms, enforces the law fairly, and involves the community and children's families in the decision-making process. With good governance, social interventions can be designed to be more targeted, sustainable, and sensitive to children's vulnerabilities. Therefore, *good governance* is an important framework in analyzing the extent to which public policies are able to reduce the number of street children and fulfill the state's constitutional mandate to protect them.

### **3.4. The Reality of Policy Practices for Handling Street Children**

The implementation of policies to handle street children in Indonesia shows complex dynamics and is still far from the principles of the rule of law and the principles of good governance. Various regions have drafted formal regulations that appear progressive—such as Regional Regulations, Governor's Regulations, and outreach programs involving relevant agencies and community institutions—but practice on the ground shows a lack of synchronization between norms, policy designs, and actual implementation patterns. This inconsistency can be seen from the policy changes that often occur along with the change of officials, the lack of program sustainability, and the absence of an integrated framework that ensures that efforts to handle street children run systematically from the prevention stage to social reintegration. A real example can be seen in

various regions such as North Sumatra, Manado, and DIY, where coaching efforts are only sporadic and have not been able to bring about significant changes in the number of children living on the streets.

In practice, a repressive approach still dominates handling in many regions. Routine raids, field control, and the transfer of street children to shelters remain the main instruments of local governments, although modern regulations emphasize an orientation on child protection. Such an approach departs from the old paradigm that views street children as a disturbance of public order. This reality is also evident in the DIY experience, where children's rights-based policies do not eliminate corrective practices; only the shape changes to be more subtle. On the other hand, Manado's experience shows the quick reaction of social services in incidental situations, but the response pattern is more in the form of short-term problem suppression than structural intervention to address the factors that cause children to take to the streets. Conditions like this show that the agenda of urban order is still prioritized over the fulfillment of children's rights as guaranteed by the constitution.

Another very significant problem is the weak cross-sector coordination between central agencies, local governments, social services, education offices, health offices, police, and community institutions. Coordination is often sectoral, non-integrated, and not supported by clear co-working mechanisms. In North Sumatra, for example, the reporting of street children's activities is still mixed in the category of MSMEs in general, making it difficult to identify specific achievements. Meanwhile, in Manado, the existence of the SLRT Team at the village level has not been able to form a strong collaboration ecosystem between regional agencies. At the same time, DIY faces obstacles in human resource capacity and weak bureaucratic commitment in carrying out the child protection mandate, so that the protection policies regulated in the Regional Regulation and Governor's Regulation are not followed by changes in the attitude and work pattern of the apparatus.

This lack of coordination is exacerbated by fundamental weaknesses in data collection. Data collection of street children is not carried out in an ongoing manner, is not based on comprehensive assessments, and often produces artificial data that does not reflect real conditions. Many regions rely only on demographic data without bio-psycho-social mapping of each child. In fact, the diversity of characteristics of street children requires interventions to be designed based on multidimensional assessments. The situation of North Sumatra, which last updated its data on street children in 2022, is a concrete example of the lack of consistency in data updates. The findings of the study in Yogyakarta further confirm that the lack of valid data causes the design of the program to be not on target, even encouraging misguided policies because street children are treated as a homogeneous group.

All of these conditions show that the policy orientation is still more inclined to the agenda of city control and aesthetics than respect for children's rights. The state's obligation to ensure the protection, fulfillment of basic rights, and social empowerment of street children as stipulated in the 1945 Constitution and the Child Protection Law has not been reflected in a humanist and sustainable approach. Current policy practices also do not fully comply with the principles of good governance, especially in the aspects of accountability, transparency, effectiveness, and responsiveness to the needs of children and their families. This reality confirms that there is a sharp gap between the ideal normative foundation and the implementation of daily policies, so that the reformulation of policy governance for the handling of street children becomes an urgent agenda that needs to be carried out in a more comprehensive, integrated, and based on full respect for children's rights.

### **3.5. Normative Gap Forms**

The normative gap in policies for handling street children is evident when comparing legal principles and principles of good governance with practices in various regions. Normatively, public policies regarding street children should be oriented towards

child protection, as affirmed in the 1945 Constitution, the Child Protection Law, and the Regional Regulations/Governors at the regional level. However, implementation in the field still shows a pattern of handling that tends to be repressive. Raids, control, and forced transfer of street children to shelters remain the main instruments, even though this approach is contrary to the principles of child protection, which require respect for the dignity, right to life, and growth and development of children (Khusna et al., 2024). This inconsistency reflects a shift in policy orientation from the protection of children's rights to the agenda of urban order.

The inconsistency of the policy with the mandate of the constitution has further widened the normative gap that has occurred. The 1945 Constitution requires the state to take care of the poor and abandoned children and ensure fair public services. However, many regional policies actually move partially, sectorally, and unsustainably. Regulatory reforms, such as Regional Regulations or Governor's Regulations, are not always followed by governance transformation at the executive level, so the normative mandate only stops at the level of legal text. In some areas, the change of officials led to a change in policy direction, showing the absence of consistency and a long-term vision in child protection. This condition illustrates that the policy orientation is still on administrative logic, not on fulfilling the country's constitutional obligations.

The gap can also be seen from the non-achievement of the principles of participation, transparency, and responsiveness in bureaucratic work. Ideally, policies for handling street children involve the voices of children, families, communities, non-governmental institutions, and academics. However, the design of the program that runs is more top-down, does not facilitate public participation, and minimizes information dissemination. Data transparency has also not been adequately built; Data collection is not updated periodically, is not based on a comprehensive assessment, and is not publicly available. This situation has implications for the government's low responsiveness to the specific needs of children and their families, because policies are formulated without an accurate mapping of problems.

In addition, programs to handle street children are often not adapted to the socio-cultural and economic context in each region. A uniform and formalistic approach ignores the diversity of factors that cause children to take to the streets, such as family dynamics, local economic pressures, or community life patterns. The experiences of DIY, North Sumatra, and Manado show that programs that do not consider the local context tend to fail to achieve long-term goals. This discrepancy between programs and real conditions shows the weakness of translating legal norms into policy strategies that are sensitive to societal dynamics.

The last normative gap is related to the low accountability of the bureaucracy. Many street child treatment programs do not have clear performance indicators, are not closely monitored, and are not reported separately from other categories of MSMEs. Weak accountability results in untargeted aid distribution, unsustainable intervention programs, and the absence of an evaluation mechanism to assess policy effectiveness. As a result, children's rights are often ignored, and government programs are only ceremonial or administrative. This situation shows that the principle of accountability, which is a key pillar in the state of law and good governance, has not been internalized in the practice of handling street children.

Overall, the normative gap reflects the gap between the ideal principle of the rule of law—which places children as the subject of rights—and the reality of policies that tend to be short-term, administrative, and not yet based on good governance. Policy reformulation is very important so that the handling of street children is truly aligned with the constitutional mandate, child protection principles, and modern governance standards.

### ***3.6 Strengthening Public Policy Governance in Harmony with the State of Law and the Principles of Good Governance***

Efforts to strengthen policy governance for handling street children require strategies that are not only administrative, but also ensure alignment between legal norms, good

*governance principles*, and the real needs of the community that are the main targets of the policy. The first strengthening lies in the harmonization of regulations and legal certainty. So far, there has been a lack of synchronization between central policies—such as the national program for handling People with Social Welfare Problems (MSMEs)—and regional policies that have different social, cultural, and institutional characteristics. As a result, the implementation of policies often runs non-uniformly, even in opposition to each other. Regulatory alignment is very necessary so that all regional policies refer to the child protection framework as mandated by the 1945 Constitution Article 28B paragraph (2) and Article 34 paragraph (1), and emphasized through the Child Protection Law and the Public Service Law. In addition, it is important to prepare minimum service standards (SLM) for handling street children that are binding on all local governments, including assessment-based data collection, outreach procedures that prioritize children's rights, provision of basic services, and family reintegration mechanisms that meet sustainability principles. Furthermore, the preparation of a *national roadmap* for handling street children will provide a consistent long-term policy direction, considering that so far, many programs have been reactive, sporadic, and dependent on the change of officials.

Strengthening governance also requires more systematic institutional coordination. The handling of street children has so far spread across various agencies—the Social Service, the PPPA Office, the Police, the Education Office, and economic empowerment institutions—but it does not yet have an effective role integration mechanism. In order for policies to run in line with the principle of integration in the rule of law, it is necessary to strengthen formal coordination structures, including cross-agency forums tasked with agreeing on workflows, operational standards for handling cases, and a clear division of authority. Optimizing the integrated referral service system (SLRT) is very important to connect community reports, outreach processes in the field, multidisciplinary assessments, and follow-up services involving orphanages, halfway houses, health facilities, and educational institutions. Without strong coordination, policies risk running partial, overlapping programs, and even a lack of responsibility when children need quick and targeted intervention.

One of the most fundamental problems that must be addressed is the lack of transparency and accountability, especially in terms of data collection and budget use. The government needs a valid, dynamic, and integrated national database between the central and regional governments, because so far the data collection of street children has tended to be temporary, not updated regularly, and does not even use adequate bio-psycho-social assessments. The weakness of this data has direct implications for the inaccuracy of policy objectives. Therefore, budgeting needs to be directed to an *evidence-based policy approach*, so that the allocation of state resources is used in interventions that have proven to be effective. In addition, the publication of annual reports on street children policies should be carried out openly to strengthen public accountability, while providing a space for evaluation for civil society, academics, and government oversight agencies.

Furthermore, strengthening governance must be based on a rights-based approach, which places the child as the subject of rights, not the object of control (Herbowo, 2025). The policy of handling street children so far is still largely oriented towards maintaining city order through raids and control, thus ignoring the structural causes that encourage children to take to the streets (Amelia, 2025). The rights-based approach requires the government to prioritize prevention through strengthening families, improving basic education and health services, psychosocial support, and socio-economic empowerment of poor families. The social reintegration model should also be designed as a long-term process, not a one-time intervention, given that many children return to the streets because families are unprepared, economic conditions do not change, or the social environment is not supportive. By adopting a human rights and child protection approach, government policies can better reflect the values of the rule of law that uphold substantive justice (Maemunah, 2019).

In addition, community and multi-stakeholder participation is an important foundation to ensure policies are truly responsive to local needs. The involvement of communities, NGOs, academics, religious leaders, and the business world can enrich policy perspectives and innovations, while filling the government's weaknesses in human resources and budgets. Public consultation mechanisms—either through discussion forums, *public hearings*, as well as the absorption of community-based aspirations—will ensure that policies do not only come down from the top (*top-down*), but also are informed by the experiences of those who interact directly with street children (Augustine, 2025). In addition, the development of community-based interventions will strengthen social safety nets and encourage community ownership of street child treatment programs, ultimately improving the sustainability of the program. All of these steps show that strengthening public policy governance does not stop at administrative improvements or the preparation of planning documents. This strengthening is a paradigm transformation towards the implementation of a government that prioritizes human dignity, guarantees the basic rights of children, and reflects the principles of the rule of law and *good governance* standards. With a more adaptive, inclusive, and rights-based governance model, the handling of street children can move from a short-term approach that is reactive to a humane, consistent, and sustainable policy.

#### 4. Conclusions

The policy of handling street children in Indonesia has a strong normative foundation through the constitution and several regulations that affirm the state's obligation to ensure the protection and fulfillment of children's rights. This condition shows that the ideal legal framework is available to be a foothold for a fair public policy and in accordance with the principles of the rule of law and good governance. The reality on the ground shows that the implementation of policies has not fully reflected these ideal norms.

Legal clarity, policy consistency, institutional coordination, data quality, and regulatory rather than protective measures are lacking. Openness, accountability, engagement, effectiveness, and human dignity are lacking in street kid governance. Periodic policy changes widen the gap between state standards and reality.

Better public policy governance requires regulatory harmonization, cross-sector collaboration, an integrated data system, and a children's rights-based approach. Focusing on social empowerment, prevention, and reintegration instead of repression may improve policies and strengthen the state's constitutional mandate. This strengthening effort might combine street child programs with the rule of law and strong governance for more humane, fair, and long-term protection.

To protect and empower people, governments must make numerous adjustments swiftly from terrible to good. Child rights-based SOPs require local governments to undertake protective outreach instead of raids and forceful removal. To avoid silos, social services, education, health, and police must collaborate. Family empowerment, street kid psychological support, and vocational programs demand social budgets. A more detailed, public national-local data system is needed to identify children's needs and track program success. The state needs good kid shelters and programs, not simply removal. The improvements promote social empowerment above control and protection.

Additional considerations are needed to ensure court order compliance and street kid management. The government must first set norms and combine legal and administrative local efforts to demand rights-derived activities. Second, policy transparency demands audits and public disclosure of institutions. Third, local police, social workers, and others must be authorized to pass child-protection laws. Fourthly, including communities, NGOs, and children advocacy groups in program design, monitoring, and assessment might strengthen state local governance. Last, evidence-based policy should be executed via reliable data systems, policy feedback, and closed-loop research to accomplish legal, equitable, and efficient social effects.

## 5. Patents

**This section is not mandatory**, but may be added if there are patents resulting from the work reported in this manuscript.

**Supplementary Materials:** The following supporting information can be downloaded at: <https://legal.isha.or.id/index.php/legal/index>, Figure S1: title; Table S1: title; Video S1: title.

**Author Contributions:** Diah Turis Kaemirawati: Developed the initial research concept, designed the theoretical and analytical framework, and led the overall drafting of the manuscript. Coordinated the integration of legal analysis with governance principles and ensured coherence throughout the study.

Susetya Herawati: Compiled policy documents and relevant literature, prepared the methodological section, and conducted a preliminary review of national and local practices in handling street children. Contributed to validating legal and administrative sources used in the research.

Eka Ari Endrawati: Conducted the statutory and regulatory analysis, examined the alignment of existing laws with child protection principles, and drafted the main analytical sections. Ensured the accuracy and consistency of the legal reasoning presented in the paper.

Ratna Dewi: Provided insights on the sociological and institutional dimensions of policy implementation, including the practical challenges faced by government agencies. Strengthened the discussion on the gaps between normative expectations and field realities.

Endang Sri Sulasih: Reviewed the manuscript comprehensively, refined the structure and academic clarity, and offered substantive feedback to enhance the discussion and policy recommendations. Oversaw the final editing process before submission.

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