

Collaborative Governance in Implementing Child-Friendly City Policy: Bandung City Case Study

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the collaborative governance model in the implementation of the Child-Friendly City (*Kota Layak Anak/KLA*) policy in Bandung City, identifies the key driving and inhibiting factors, and formulates strategic efforts to strengthen multi-stakeholder collaboration in child protection policy.

Methodology: A qualitative case study approach was employed, using in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. Data were analyzed using an interactive qualitative model guided by the Ansell and Gash collaborative governance framework, focusing on initial conditions, institutional design, facilitative leadership, and collaborative processes.

Results: The findings show that collaborative governance in the implementation of KLA in Bandung is present but not yet optimal. Collaboration remains fragmented across sectors, with challenges including unequal stakeholder capacity, limited incentives for non-governmental actors, and insufficient meaningful child participation. Existing initiatives rely heavily on administrative coordination, rather than sustained trust-based collaboration.

Conclusions: The KLA policy's success is strongly influenced by the quality of collaborative governance. Strengthening collaboration requires improving initial collaborative conditions, institutionalizing cross-sector mechanisms, enhancing facilitative leadership, and promoting inclusive stakeholder engagement, particularly at the community level.

Limitations: This single-case study may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions.

Contributions: This study enriches the collaborative governance literature by applying the Ansell and Gash model to child protection policy. It also provides practical recommendations for strengthening multi-stakeholder collaboration for more effective Child-Friendly City initiatives.

Keywords: *Child-Friendly City, Child Protection, Collaborative Governance, Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration, Public Policy*

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1. Introduction

Child protection has become an increasingly urgent global concern, particularly in urban contexts, where social complexity, inequality, and institutional fragmentation intersect. Across many countries, ensuring the fulfillment of children's rights requires not only regulatory frameworks but also effective governance mechanisms that integrate multiple actors. In Indonesia, the urgency of this issue is reflected in the increasing number of child violence cases. Data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection indicate a continuous increase from 17,641 cases in 2022 to 21,648 cases in 2024, demonstrating persistent and systemic challenges in child protection.

To address these issues, the government has institutionalized the Child-Friendly City (*Kota Layak Anak/KLA*) policy as a national strategy to integrate children’s rights into local development planning, service delivery, and governance. The KLA framework emphasizes multisectoral collaboration involving government agencies, civil society, the private sector, communities, and children themselves. Internationally, similar approaches have been implemented through UNICEF’s Child-Friendly Cities Initiative, which highlights the importance of participatory governance, cross-sector integration and child-centered policymaking. However, experiences across countries show that the success of such initiatives depends heavily on the quality of collaborative governance arrangements rather than on merely formal policy adoption.

In the Indonesian context, the implementation of the KLA demonstrates varying levels of effectiveness across regions. Bandung City presents an important case, as it has achieved the “Madya” category in national KLA evaluations while simultaneously facing persistent challenges in terms of child protection. Empirical data from the Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak (KemenPPPA) through the SIMFONI-PPA system show that Bandung recorded 449 cases of child violence in 2023 and 340 cases in 2024. This indicates that child protection outcomes remain inconsistent despite policy recognition and institutional efforts. The persistence of high case numbers suggests that existing interventions have not yet effectively addressed the root causes of violence, highlighting gaps in program implementation and governance arrangements.

Table 1. Number of violence cases against in Bandung City January-August 2024

Number of Child Clients		Types of Violence	
Gender	Male Female	Physical	15
		Physiological	68
		Sexual	78
Total	40	Economic/Neglect	14
		Trafficking	3
		Child Custody Issues	2
	134	Others	1
Total		Total Cases	181

Table 1 shows that the number of violence types experienced by children exceeds the total number of victims by gender, indicating that a single child may experience multiple forms of violence. Sexual violence is the most prevalent type, reflecting critical vulnerabilities in child protection mechanisms. This pattern suggests that existing policies have not yet ensured comprehensive protection and highlights the need for more integrated and preventive approaches across sectors. Furthermore, the evaluation results indicate significant performance gaps across KLA clusters, particularly at the sub-district and village levels, with a disparity of more than 30 points. This gap reflects an uneven implementation capacity and highlights structural weaknesses in local-level governance. This suggests that collaborative arrangements have not been effectively institutionalized across administrative levels, limiting the ability of actors to coordinate and deliver integrated child protection services.

At the institutional level, the implementation of the Child-Friendly City policy in Bandung is coordinated by the Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak (DP3A) as the leading sector, supported by formal regulations and cross-sectoral structures. However, the persistence of performance gaps indicates that formal institutional arrangements have not fully translated into effective operational coordination. This reflects a common challenge in collaborative governance, where structures exist but lack internalization by actors.

Tabel 2. Independent evaluation scores for child-friendly city of Bandung

Cluster	Target	Realization	Gap
Institutional	164.00	145.24	18.76
Civil Rights and Freedom	115.00	103.00	12.00
Family Environment and Alternative Care	156.00	136.00	20.00

Basic Health and Welfare	150.00	142.50	7.50
Education, Leisure and Cultural Activities	110.00	105.60	4.40
Special Protection	205.00	179.20	25.80
KLA Implementation in Sub-Districts and Villages	100.00	68.85	31.15

Table 2 shows the largest gap is found in the implementation of KLA at the sub-district and village levels (31.15 points), suggesting that early collaborative conditions in local governance still face major constraints, including limited actor capacity and uneven roles among stakeholders. As a multi-actor policy, the KLA requires well-functioning collaborative governance. However, the findings indicate that collaboration in Bandung remains uneven and insufficiently institutionalized. Coordination tends to rely on administrative directives rather than sustained interaction, while non-government actors participate sporadically, and children's involvement remains largely symbolic. This reflects weaknesses in the key dimensions of collaborative governance, particularly in initial conditions, institutional design, and facilitative leadership, as conceptualized by [Ansell and Gash \(2018\)](#).

Historical relationships and prior collaborative experiences among actors also appear to be limited, affecting levels of trust and shared commitment. This suggests that collaborative processes in Bandung are still in the early stages of development, where trust is not yet embedded and must be built through repeated interactions. Weak trust conditions can hinder effective coordination and reduce the sustainability of collaborative efforts. Moreover, significant disparities in power and resource distribution persist among the actors. Government agencies dominate decision-making processes, whereas non-government actors and children have limited influence. This imbalance constrains the development of inclusive collaboration and reflects weak initial conditions, particularly in terms of power asymmetry and participatory equity. The limited involvement of children in policy-making forums further indicates that participation remains procedural rather than substantive.

According to [Emerson and Nabatchi \(2015\)](#), scholars increasingly argue that such persistent policy gaps stem from weak governance arrangements rather than purely technical program limitations. Collaborative governance has emerged as a critical framework for addressing complex public issues, emphasizing structured cooperation among government agencies, civil society organizations, communities, private actors, and children themselves. [Ansell and Gash \(2018\)](#) identify four dimensions that shape collaborative effectiveness initial conditions, institutional design, facilitative leadership, and collaborative processes making this framework particularly relevant for analyzing KLA implementation.

Despite its relevance, research applying collaborative governance to child protection and the KLA framework is limited. Existing studies tend to focus on regulatory compliance, program evaluation, or sector-specific issues, rather than examining the governance relationships that determine policy outcomes ([Björstig, Johansson, Mancheva, & Sandström, 2024](#)). Empirical assessments have also shown that child participation in local governance often remains symbolic or inconsistent, despite being a core principle of the KLA policy. In Bandung City, multi-stakeholder structures, such as working groups, community-based child protection groups, and child forums, have been established. According to [Linawati and Noviayanti \(2023\)](#), several fundamental challenges persist, including fragmented cross-sector coordination, unclear role division, unequal actor capacity, and reliance on hierarchical administrative processes rather than trust-based collaboration. These challenges underscore the need for a stronger foundation of collaborative prerequisites to ensure successful KLA governance.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the collaborative governance model in the implementation of the Child-Friendly City policy in Bandung City, identify the driving and inhibiting factors that influence collaborative processes, and propose strategic efforts to strengthen multisectoral collaboration in child protection governance. By employing the collaborative governance framework of [Ansell and Gash \(2018\)](#), this study contributes to the literature on public administration and child protection by providing empirical insights into collaborative practices within local government contexts. Practically, the

findings offer actionable recommendations for institutionalizing collaboration, enhancing meaningful child participation, and improving the effectiveness and sustainability of Child-Friendly City initiatives.

2. Literature Review

2.1 *The Concept of Collaboration in Public Governance*

In contemporary public administration, collaboration has become a central governance approach for addressing complex and cross-sectoral public issues. Traditional hierarchical government structures are increasingly considered insufficient for addressing issues such as climate change, public health, social inequality, and digital transformation. Consequently, public governance has shifted toward more networked and interactive arrangements involving multiple stakeholders. From an institutional perspective, [Peters \(2020\)](#) highlights collaboration as a response to fragmentation within modern governance systems. As public authority becomes dispersed across agencies, levels of government, and sectors, coordination challenges intensify. Collaboration serves as a mechanism for integrating fragmented structures through network-based interactions rather than relying solely on hierarchical commands. In this sense, collaborative governance enhances state capacity by mobilizing the distributed expertise and resources.

Similarly, [Torfing and Sorensen \(2011\)](#) conceptualize collaboration as a form of interactive governance that stimulates public innovation. They argue that collaboration facilitates knowledge exchange, interest negotiation, and solution co-creation among actors with diverse resources and perspectives. Rather than emphasizing control or coordination alone, collaborative governance prioritizes dialogue, mutual learning, and the joint ownership of policy outcomes. This deliberative dimension strengthens both the legitimacy and quality of public decision-making.

Furthermore, [Voets, Brandsen, Koliba, and Verschuere \(2021\)](#) propose the concept of a collaborative governance regime, defined as a system in which cross-sector actors engage in sustained interaction to produce public value. Their framework emphasizes three core elements: principled engagement (inclusive and deliberative interaction), shared motivation (trust, mutual understanding, and commitment), and joint capacity (institutional arrangements and resources that enable collective action). This model underscores that collaboration is a dynamic and evolving process requiring continuous relationship building and institutional support. Several scholars have noted that the rise of collaboration in governance is driven by:

1. The complexity of public problems.
2. The limitations of bureaucratic approaches.
3. The diversification of actors involved in public service delivery.
4. The need for legitimacy and community engagement.

Overall, collaboration in public governance can be understood as an institutionalized, cross-sectoral approach that brings together governmental and non-governmental actors to deliberate, decide, and act collectively to pursue shared public objectives. It is characterized by horizontal interactions, shared responsibilities, mutual trust, and co-production of public value. As governance challenges become increasingly complex, collaborative arrangements are viewed as essential mechanisms for achieving sustainable and legitimate policy results. In child protection, collaboration is essential because the well-being of children intersects education, health, social welfare, law enforcement, and community norms. [Larrea, Arrona, and Barandiaran \(2024\)](#) said that no single institution holds authority or resources to address all aspects of child vulnerability, making collaborative approaches not only beneficial but indispensable.

2.2 *Theoretical Framework: Collaborative Governance Model*

While collaboration has become a normative expectation in contemporary governance, its effectiveness depends on specific conditions and mechanisms of the collaboration. The most widely applied theoretical model is the Collaborative Governance Framework developed by [Ansell & Gash, 2018](#)). This model defines collaborative governance as a formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative process in which public agencies engage non-state stakeholders in collective decision-making, as shown in Figure 1.

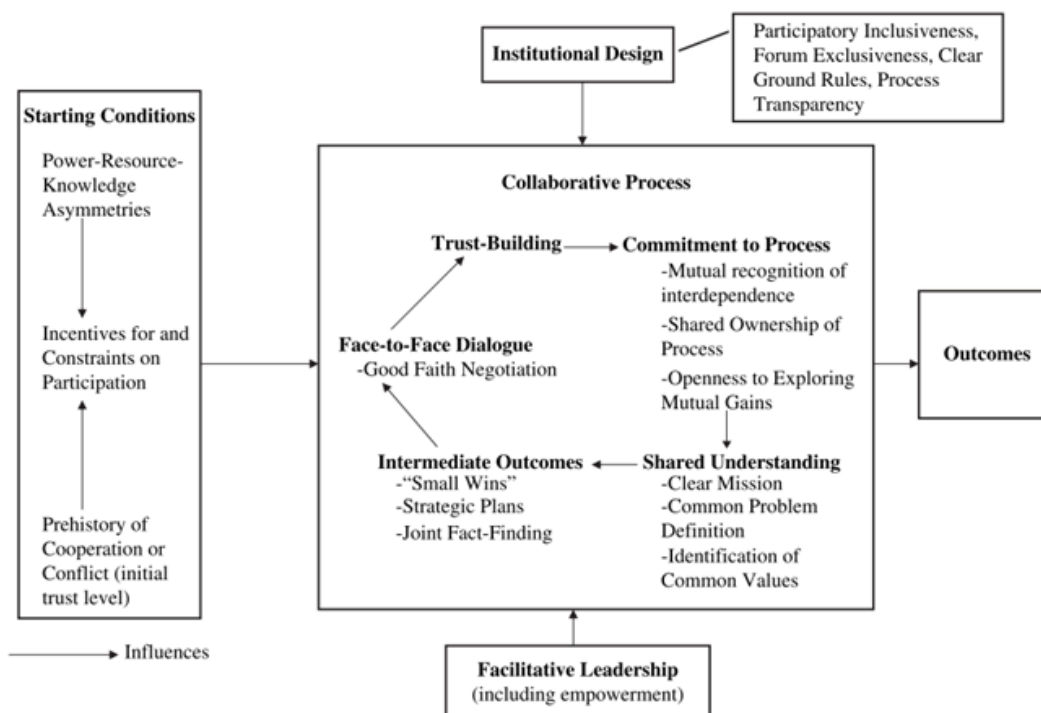


Figure 1. Collaborative governance theory by [Ansell and Gash \(2018\)](#)

2.2.1 Initial Conditions

[Newig, Challies, Jager, Kochskaemper, and Adzersen \(2018\)](#) analyzed how power asymmetries and stakeholder representation influence collaborative governance outcomes. Their study demonstrated that initial power configurations, resource distribution, and levels of trust significantly affect both the inclusiveness and effectiveness of collaborative processes. They argue that when the initial conditions are characterized by strong power imbalances or weak stakeholder capacity, collaborative arrangements tend to reproduce inequality rather than foster genuine collective decision-making. Therefore, equitable resource access and early trust-building mechanisms are crucial to sustainable collaboration.

2.2.2 Institutional Design

Institutional design refers to the formal and informal governance arrangements that structure the collaboration. It includes procedural rules, role clarity, coordination mechanisms, and participatory structures. A well-designed institutional framework reduces ambiguity, clarifies expectations, and enhances accountability among the participating actors. Without clear rules and transparent processes, collaboration risks becoming either symbolic or inefficient. [Batory and Svensson \(2019\)](#) reinforce this argument by showing that conceptual and structural ambiguity often weakens collaborative governance arrangements. Their systematic review highlights that effective institutional design requires clear decision-making procedures, defined actor responsibilities, and inclusive forums that enable meaningful participation in the decision-making process.

2.2.3 Facilitative Leadership

Leadership in collaborative governance differs fundamentally from traditional hierarchical authority. Rather than exercising command-and-control power, collaborative leaders act as facilitators who convene stakeholders, mediate conflicts, and sustain dialogue. Effective facilitative leadership ensures that diverse interests are acknowledged and aligned with shared goals. [Bryson, Crosby, and Seo \(2020\)](#), in *Public Administration Review*, emphasize that cross-sector collaborations require leaders capable of building trust and fostering shared commitment. Their findings suggest that collaborative initiatives rarely succeed without leaders who actively manage relationships, bridge institutional divides and maintain momentum throughout the process.

2.2.4 Collaborative Process

The collaborative process involves iterative interactions, including face-to-face dialogue, trust building, joint problem framing, and the production of intermediate outcomes. These processes generate a shared understanding and reinforce the collective ownership of decisions. In contrast, weak interaction patterns often lead to fragmented coordination and superficial engagement. [Avoyan, Kaufmann, Lagendijk, and Meijerink \(2024\)](#), empirically demonstrate that the quality of collaborative interaction particularly principled engagement and shared motivation is directly linked to governance performance. Their findings indicate that sustained dialogue and joint capacity building are essential mechanisms through which collaboration translates into tangible policy outcomes.

2.3 Child-Friendly City (Kota Layak Anak) Framework

The Child-Friendly City (KLA) policy is derived from UNICEF's Child-Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI), which promotes the integration of children's rights into local governance. Indonesia institutionalized this commitment through the Child Protection Law and Ministerial Regulation PPPA No. 12/2022, which requires all districts and cities to ensure that development processes fulfill children's rights. In Indonesia, the development of the Child-Friendly City (KLA) policy has been significantly strengthened through the issuance of Presidential Regulation No. 25 of 2021, concerning the National Policy on Child-Friendly Cities. This regulation aims to ensure that all districts and cities implement mechanisms that fulfill children's rights and provide special protective measures. It also outlines the roles of civil society, the private sector, and the media in supporting the KLA's implementation. Subsequently, the Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak (Kementerian PPPA) issued Ministerial Regulation No. 12 of 2022, which provides technical guidance for regional governments on the planning, preparation, implementation, evaluation, and assessment of KLA performance.

The legal foundation for defining a child in Indonesia is stated in Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection, which defines a child as any person under the age of 18, including those still in the womb. Based on demographic data from 2023, Bandung City is home to 710,113 children aged 0–17 years, consisting of 366,047 boys and 344,066 girls, indicating that the population of boys is slightly higher than that of girls. This large child population underscores the importance of effective implementation of KLA policies at the municipal level.

The Bandung City Government formalized its commitment to child protection and KLA development through Regional Regulation No. 4 of 2019, which amends Regional Regulation No. 10 of 2012 on Child Protection. This regional regulation explicitly includes policy provisions for the development of a Child-Friendly City and further details KLA indicators in its appendices, thereby ensuring alignment with national standards. Additionally, Bandung has issued specific policy instruments related to KLA that elaborate on the five major clusters of children's rights mandated by national and international frameworks. Together, these historical, legal, and demographic foundations reveal that the KLA policy in Bandung is not only a normative obligation but also a strategic necessity for ensuring the protection and fulfilment of children's rights in an urban context.

2.4 Child Participation in Local Governance

Child participation is a central pillar of both the KLA framework and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). According to [Effendi and Valentina \(2026\)](#), meaningful child participation requires accessible platforms, informed involvement, adult support, and real decision-making. Without institutional mechanisms to ensure these elements, participation risks becoming symbolic rather than substantive. UNICEF Indonesia in 2022 notes that although many municipalities establish child forums, children are often excluded from formal decision-making arenas such as the Musrenbang. These findings suggest that although participatory structures exist, their influence on policy outcomes remains limited.

2.5 Collaborative Governance in Child Protection Policy

The child protection policy requires coordinated action among government agencies, law enforcement institutions, social services, schools, and civil society organizations. The complexity of child welfare

issues demands integrated responses that transcend sectoral boundaries. In this context, collaborative governance is a critical framework for aligning authority, resources, and expertise across institutional domains. Collaborative governance refers to structured arrangements in which public and non-state actors collectively deliberate, coordinate, and implement policies to address shared challenges.

[Torfing \(2019\)](#) states that collaborative governance generates meaningful outcomes when actors are enabled to co-create solutions and share responsibility rather than merely comply with predefined directives. Without such conditions, collaboration risks remaining procedural, rather than transformative. In complex policy fields such as child protection, fragmented institutional responses often result in inefficiency and duplication, reinforcing the need for structured collaboration among stakeholders. Similarly, [Afandi, Tri Anomsari, Novira, and Sudartini \(2023\)](#) emphasized that effective collaborative governance requires inclusive deliberative processes that enable stakeholders to participate meaningfully in decision-making rather than merely implementing predetermined directives.

[Nazaruddin et al. \(2024\)](#) further contend that collaboration generates value only when actors are empowered to co create solutions and share responsibility for outcomes. When collaboration is limited to formal coordination without genuine joint problem-solving, it risks remaining procedural rather than transformative. [Li, Zhang, Wu, and Lv \(2024\)](#) also highlight that sustained collaboration depends on institutional mechanisms that foster shared ownership, accountability, and continuous engagement among stakeholders. These perspectives help to explain the situation in Bandung. Although coordination structures for Child Friendly City implementation exist, they are not fully embedded in stable institutional arrangements.

Collaboration often depends on informal relationships and administrative cycles, and incentives for non-government actors remain poorly defined. Such conditions hinder the development of durable cross-sector partnerships and limit the emergence of integrated child protection systems. From a collaborative governance perspective, strengthening child protection policy in Bandung requires more deliberate network management, clearer role negotiation, and institutionalized participatory mechanisms. Establishing inclusive collaborative arenas and reinforcing accountability structures are essential steps toward transforming fragmented coordination into sustained and equitable multisector governance capable of addressing complex child-welfare challenges.

2.6 Research Gap

Although prior studies have provided insights into collaborative governance and child protection, several gaps remain. First, the application of [Ansell and Gash \(2018\)](#) collaborative governance model to Child-Friendly City (KLA) implementation remains limited, particularly in the Indonesian context. The relationship between collaborative prerequisites, such as incentives, power asymmetry, trust, and institutional design, and KLA performance outcomes has not been systematically examined. Second, existing KLA research largely emphasizes compliance and program evaluation, with limited integration of performance data and collaborative processes at the sub-district and village levels. Third, despite child participation being central to the KLA framework, children are rarely analyzed as stakeholders within collaborative governance structures. Finally, empirical studies in large metropolitan contexts, such as Bandung, remain scarce. These gaps highlight the need to examine how collaborative governance operates within the KLA policy and how actor relationships, including those with children, shape policy outcomes.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach to explore the dynamics of collaborative governance in the implementation of the Child-Friendly City (*Kota Layak Anak*/KLA) policy in Bandung. The case study method enables an in-depth exploration of real-life processes, inter-organizational relationships, and policy implementation mechanisms that cannot be fully captured through quantitative methods. According to [Yin, \(2018\)](#), qualitative case studies are suitable for examining contemporary phenomena in their natural settings, where contextual conditions strongly influence the issue being studied. Given that KLA implementation involves diverse actors, complex coordination, and multilevel governance, this approach allows for a comprehensive examination of how collaboration unfolds in practice.

[Yin, \(2018\)](#) states that a qualitative case study is particularly suitable for examining complex organizational phenomena embedded within real-life contexts. Guided by this perspective, this study adopts a qualitative case study design supported by descriptive quantitative analysis to investigate competency development issues following job equalization policies. The study is exploratory and survey-based in nature, aiming to describe existing competency conditions, identify gaps, and formulate strategic development priorities rather than establishing causal relationships.

3.1 Research Design

This study employs an intrinsic case study design because Bandung City represents a distinctive and policy-relevant context in the implementation of the Child Friendly City initiative. [Thomas, \(2021\)](#) further emphasizes that an intrinsic case study design is suitable when the case itself holds particular significance and warrants a detailed investigation. In this research, Bandung is not treated merely as an example of KLA implementation but as a complex urban governance setting with distinctive collaborative challenges and actor configurations.

[Huyler and McGill \(2019\)](#) further emphasized that qualitative research designs are appropriate when the goal is to explore complex processes, understand participant perspectives, and analyze contextual interactions. The implementation of the KLA involves multiple actors, diverse institutional mandates, and evolving governance relationships, which require an approach capable of capturing nuanced interactions rather than relying on variable isolation. [Hyett, Kenny, and Dickson-Swift \(2014\)](#) argue that case study methodology is especially valuable in governance and social policy research because it allows process tracing and in-depth examination of actor relationships across time. This is particularly relevant for analyzing collaborative governance, where outcomes are shaped by initial conditions, institutional design, leadership practices, and dynamic interactions.

Accordingly, this study focuses on examining collaborative governance processes among actors involved in KLA implementation, including government agencies, children's forums, civil society organizations, private sector actors, and supporting institutions in the Philippines. By adopting an intrinsic case study design, this research prioritizes contextual depth, relational dynamics, and the lived experiences of stakeholders. The objective is not statistical generalization but analytical insight into how collaborative governance operates within Bandung's specific urban policy environment.

3.2 Data Sources and Materials

3.2.1 Primary Data Materials

Primary data were collected through multiple methods, including in-depth semi-structured interviews guided by an interview protocol developed from the collaborative governance dimensions proposed by [Ansell and Gash \(2018\)](#). In addition, non-participant observations were conducted using an observation sheet to systematically document interactions, coordination meetings, and activities related to KLA implementation in Bandung. Field notes were also written during site visits and stakeholder interactions to capture contextual details and insights that complemented the interviews and observations.

3.2.2 Secondary Data Materials

Secondary data were gathered from various sources, including Bandung City Child-Friendly City evaluation documents, SIMFONI PPA data on child violence cases, local regulations and ministerial regulations on KLA, Bandung City DP3A reports, as well as organizational documents, meeting minutes, and planning documents relevant to KLA implementation. These materials were used to support triangulation and enhance the credibility of the study findings.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques and Research Instruments

[Dodgson \(2017\)](#) emphasize that qualitative case studies require rich and triangulated data sources to enhance credibility. Case study research gains analytical strength through detailed contextual evidence and the integration of diverse forms of data, including interviews, documents, and observational materials. Rather than relying on a single source of information, robust case studies combine empirical materials to reveal power dynamics, institutional interactions, and actor relationships in real-world policy settings. This approach is particularly relevant to governance research, where formal structures

and informal practices often coexist. [Ravitch & Carl, \(2019\)](#) emphasize that triangulation enhances methodological integrity by enabling researchers to identify converging and diverging patterns within complex policy environments. In governance research, where institutional design, actor relationships, and leadership practices interact dynamically, such triangulated approaches are particularly important for generating reliable and context-sensitive insights.

[Tarnoki and Puentes \(2019\)](#) highlighted that triangulation enhances trustworthiness by comparing evidence across different categories of data, such as participant narratives, official documents, and policy records. Such comparisons allow researchers to identify patterns, confirm consistency, and detect discrepancies that may reveal deeper institutional dynamics. Similarly, [Liang \(2019\)](#) emphasizes that qualitative rigor depends on transparency in data collection and the inclusion of thick descriptions which enable readers to understand the contextual richness of the case.

Accordingly, this study utilized multiple primary and secondary data sources to achieve its objectives. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with government officials, representatives of children's forums, civil society organizations, and private sector actors involved in KLA implementation. Secondary data included policy documents, regional regulations, the Regional Action Plan, evaluation reports and official statistical data. By integrating these diverse sources, this research strengthens analytical credibility, enhances contextual understanding, and supports a comprehensive examination of collaborative governance processes in Child Friendly City policy of Bandung.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

3.4.1 In-depth Interviews

Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders directly involved in KLA implementation, including officials from the Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak (DP3A), sub-district and village representatives, child forum members, NGOs, and other supporting institutions in Indonesia. The interviews explored various aspects such as collaborative roles, communication patterns, challenges, power distribution, children's participation, and institutional dynamics.

3.4.2 Non-Participant Observation

Observations were conducted during coordination meetings, public service activities, and KLA-related programs. These observations helped document the interactions between actors and the extent of collaboration at different levels of governance in the study area.

3.4.3 Document Analysis

Document analysis was conducted to examine the formal regulations, evaluation reports, activity documents, and administrative files related to the KLA. This technique supports data triangulation and helps to validate the findings from interviews and observations.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

This study uses Miles and Huberman's Interactive Model, which consists of:

1. Data Reduction: Coding, categorizing, and summarizing findings from interviews, observations, and documents.
2. Data Display: Organizing information in matrices and thematic charts to identify patterns.
3. Conclusion: Drawing and verification of themes in relation to the Collaborative Governance framework by [Ansell and Gash \(2018\)](#).

The analysis followed an iterative process, allowing themes and patterns to emerge progressively as the data were reviewed and compared.

3.6 Research Conditions and Assumptions

This study was conducted under several assumptions. It assumes that the respondents provide accurate and honest information based on their roles in KLA implementation. It also assumes that official documents from the DP3A, SIMFONI PPA, and the Bandung City Government are valid and reliable. Furthermore, this study presumes that the collaborative governance theory proposed by [Ansell and Gash](#)

(2018) is appropriate for analyzing multi-actor collaboration in child protection policies. Finally, it recognizes that contextual factors, such as institutional culture, leadership style, and historical relationships, influence collaborative outcomes.

3.7 Research Setting

The study was conducted in Bandung City, focusing on several key settings: the DP3A as the leading sector of KLA, sub-district and village administrative offices, child forums at various levels, and supporting community and civil society organizations. This setting was selected because Bandung is a large urban city with complex governance structures and notable gaps in KLA performance.

3.8 Replicability

To ensure that the study could be replicated, all research procedures, including interview protocols, observation guides, and document review criteria, were systematically documented. Future researchers can repeat this study by engaging similar stakeholder groups, reviewing the corresponding documents, and applying the same collaborative governance framework under comparable conditions.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Initial Conditions

Within the Collaborative Governance model developed by [Ansell and Gash \(2018\)](#), initial conditions shape the trajectory of collaboration through factors such as power distribution, incentives, prior relationships, and trust. In Bandung's KLA governance, these conditions appear predominantly hierarchical rather than co-initiated or collaborative. The KLA framework originated from a national mandate and was translated into local regulations and planning instruments, indicating that early collaboration was driven more by compliance than by mutual problem recognition. [Torfing \(2019\)](#) notes that hierarchical institutional arrangements may constrain collaborative emergence by limiting the autonomy of non-leading actors in the policy network.

The city government relied heavily on formal instruments, such as the Regional Action Plan (RAD) and task force mechanisms, suggesting that strategic direction and role distribution were largely predetermined. [Bryson et al. \(2020\)](#) describe such arrangements as structurally driven collaboration, where predefined frameworks limit opportunities for shared agenda-setting. Technical agencies and local administrators were primarily engaged after formal directives were issued, reinforcing compliance-oriented patterns. Similarly, [Björstig et al. \(2024\)](#) warned that collaborative governance risks becoming procedural rather than transformative when shared objectives and trust are lacking.

At the sub-district and village levels, actors positioned themselves mainly as executors of city-level directives, reflecting strong vertical control consistent with ([Torfing, 2019](#)). Cross-sector relationships prior to the KLA were limited, and trust developed gradually rather than being embedded from the outset. Early stage exclusion, particularly in drafting the RAD, further constrained role negotiation and shared ownership. [Ulibarri and Scott \(2017\)](#) emphasize that equitable early engagement strengthens collaborative legitimacy, whereas selective inclusion weakens long-term performance. Despite these structural imbalances, normative motivations related to child protection and community commitment encouraged their participation.

This aligns with [Ulibarri, Imperial, Siddiki, and Henderson \(2023\)](#), who found that the effectiveness of collaborative governance is shaped by dynamic interactions among actors, including trust-building, shared motivation, and continuous engagement over time. Weak interaction patterns can limit the development of collective ownership and reduce the effectiveness of policies. Overall, the initial conditions of KLA governance in Bandung were characterized by hierarchical construction, compliance-driven coordination, limited early co-initiation, and gradual trust formation. While intrinsic incentives support participation, they do not fully compensate for the structural constraints that shape the early collaborative environment.

Table 3. Summary of findings and gaps in the initial conditions of collaboration

Sub-Aspects of Starting Conditions	Ideal Theoretical Condition	Research Findings	Identified Gaps
Co-initiation of collaboration	Jointly formulated from the start	Initiated through a policy mandate	Collaboration not based on equal agreement
Distribution of power	Actors hold relatively equal positions	Leading sector dominates	Power imbalance from the outset
History of interaction	Actors have established relationships	Early interactions were limited	Initial trust remains low
Actor involvement	All actors involved from early stages	Several actors involved only at the implementation stage	Early participation is uneven

4.2 Institutional Design

within the Collaborative Governance framework developed by [Ansell and Gash \(2018\)](#), functions as the formal and informal “rules of the game” shaping actor roles, coordination, and participation. In Bandung’s Child-Friendly City (KLA) policy, institutional arrangements have been formally established through regulations, task forces, budgets, and key instruments, such as the Regional Action Plan (RAD) and cluster-based indicators. Structurally, the framework appears to be comprehensive and aligned with national mandates. However, empirical findings indicate a gap between formal design and its practical implementation. Several sectoral agencies implement the KLA primarily through general city-level directives without internal technical guidelines or institutionalized procedures. As [Emerson and Nabatchi \(2015\)](#) note, institutional design may become symbolic rather than functional when collaborative mechanisms are not internalized across the participating organizations.

This gap is more pronounced at the sub-district and village levels, where operational guidance is limited and implementation often depends on individual initiative rather than standardized procedures. [Torfing \(2019\)](#) similarly observed that top-down institutional arrangements frequently struggle to materialize effectively at lower administrative levels when not supported by localized operational frameworks. Coordination through cluster-based forums exists; however, interactions remain largely sectoral and fragmented, particularly in cross-sector cases requiring integrated responses.

In terms of inclusivity, private sector actors are not systematically embedded across all KLA clusters. Engagement tends to occur through selected individuals rather than integrated mechanisms, thereby limiting consistent participation. [Ansell and Gash \(2018\)](#) emphasized that collaborative platforms must be deliberately designed to integrate diverse stakeholders in structured and sustained ways. Likewise, [Bryson et al. \(2020\)](#) stressed that cross-sector collaboration requires intentional institutional embedding rather than ad hoc engagement. Therefore, limited inclusivity weakens shared ownership and reduces the transformative capacity of collaboration. Overall, Bandung’s KLA governance demonstrates a strong formal institutional design but limited operational consolidation. Uneven internalization across agencies, fragmented coordination, restricted inclusivity, and weak localization at lower administrative levels constrain the institutional framework from functioning as a fully integrated, collaborative platform.

Table 4. Summary of findings and gaps in institutional design

Sub-Aspects of Institutional Design	Ideal Theoretical Condition	Research Findings	Identified Gaps
Clarity of ground rules	Rules collaboratively developed and understood	RAD and Task Forces are available, but not translated into sector-specific guidelines	Ground rules not fully internalized across all actors
Shared rule-making	Rules developed collaboratively	Framework dominated by the leading sector	Limited participation of other actors in rule-making

Cross-level institutionalization	Institutionalized from city-level down to district and village	Strong at the city level, weak at lower administrative levels	Limited participation of other actors in rule-making
Cross-level institutionalization	Institutionalized from city-level down to district and village	Strong at the city level, weak at lower administrative levels	Implementation inconsistent across levels

4.3 Facilitative Leadership

Facilitative leadership is a central dimension of the Collaborative Governance framework, functioning to convene, motivate, and empower actors throughout the collaborative process. Unlike hierarchical leadership, it emphasizes mediation, trust-building, and shared ownership. In Bandung's KLA governance, leadership structures formally exist, particularly within the leading sector; however, facilitative practices remain limited and uneven.

At the city level, leadership is largely administrative and compliance-oriented, focusing on meeting national indicators and reporting requirements. Coordination intensifies around evaluation deadlines and often takes a directive rather than an interactive approach. Although this ensures procedural compliance, it does not foster sustained collaboration. [Ansell and Gash \(2018\)](#) argue that administrative leadership alone is insufficient to sustain cross-sector problem solving. [Ulibarri and Scott \(2017\)](#) further note that episodic leadership weakens long term stakeholder commitment. Technical agencies rely heavily on guidance from the leading sector due to limited internal direction, reinforcing centralized authority. [Torfing \(2019\)](#) explains that excessive centralization can hinder collaborative innovation by reducing actor autonomy. [McNaught \(2024\)](#) described that, at the sub-district and village levels, leadership depends largely on individual initiative. Although some administrators act as collaborative champions, such practices are not consistent across units.

Non-government actors also experience selective engagement shaped by personal relationships rather than institutional leadership mechanisms. [Batory and Svensson \(2019\)](#) and [Brunet, Petit, and Romero-Torres \(2024\)](#) emphasize that facilitative leadership must bridge government and non-government actors to ensure inclusive collaboration, a condition that is yet to be fully realized in Bandung. Leadership for child participation is also limited. According to [Peters \(2020\)](#), meaningful child participation requires that children are not only present in formal forums but are also given real influence in decision-making processes; when participation is limited to symbolic involvement, it fails to contribute to substantive policy outcomes. Overall, leadership in Bandung's KLA governance remains predominantly compliance-driven, with limited facilitative practices that support sustained interaction and shared ownership. Uneven leadership capacity and selective engagement constrain the development of robust, collaborative governance. Therefore, strengthening facilitative leadership is essential for moving from procedural coordination to continuous and transformative collaboration.

Table 5. Summary of findings and gaps in facilitative leadership

Sub-Aspect of Facilitative Leadership	Ideal Theoretical Condition	Research Findings	Identified Gaps
Leadership Distribution	Leadership is collective	Leadership concentrated in the DP3A	High dependence on the leading sector
Collaboration Continuity	Collaboration continues even without a single driving actor	Coordination weakens without DP3A facilitation	Limited initiative from other actors
Local-Level Leadership	Facilitation extends to local levels	Sub-districts and villages wait for directives	Local leadership not yet established

4.4 Collaborative Process

The collaborative process in the implementation of the Child-Friendly City (KLA) policy in Bandung City reflects a pattern of engagement that is active yet constrained, shaped by the hierarchical institutional environment and uneven participation among stakeholders.

4.4.1 Face to Face Dialogue

Face-to-face dialogue in Bandung's KLA implementation is routinely conducted; however, its form and substance strongly reflect the hierarchical orientation found throughout the policy structure. Dialogue occurs primarily during formal meetings facilitated by the DP3A, such as cluster-based technical assistance sessions and evidence-input workshops, which focus on ensuring that each OPD understands its indicator obligations. These meetings emphasize administrative compliance over collaborative deliberation. Discussions tend to revolve around updating progress on indicator scores, verifying supporting documents, and clarifying technical instructions for the national KLA evaluation process. Consequently, opportunities for actors to jointly reflect on the underlying child rights issues, such as gaps in special protection, child participation, or safe public spaces, remain limited.

At the sub-district and village levels, face-to-face interactions mirror this pattern; meetings simply transmit city-level instructions, giving local officials minimal room to contextualize KLA activities according to their communities' needs. Non-government actors, such as APSAI and child-focused NGOs, are sometimes involved, but their participation is often selective and tied to specific activities rather than being integrated into the full cycle of dialogue. Likewise, children's representatives in the Forum Anak are generally invited for ceremonial or representational purposes and do not participate in substantive deliberative discussions. Consequently, dialogue remains procedural and compliance-oriented rather than deliberative, preventing deeper mutual learning and joint sense-making.

4.4.2 Trust Building

Trust within the collaborative network is shaped by a strong dependence on DP3A as the policy lead. Most OPD rely on DP3A for clarity on indicators, timing of evidence submission, and coordination of inter-organizational meetings, creating a model of vertical trust rather than mutual confidence across agencies. This pattern is consistent with field findings showing that sectoral offices such as Health, Education, Civil Registry, and Social Welfare participate primarily when convened by the DP3A and that cross-sector dialogue outside these convening moments is limited. Horizontal trust between agencies remains underdeveloped because interactions are mostly transactional and tied to administrative cycles, especially annual KLA assessments.

In areas requiring intensive cross-sector collaboration, such as child vulnerability mapping, cases of violence, or special protection, the absence of established trust often leads actors to work independently within their sectoral routines before coordination occurs. Non-government actors, including APSAI and local NGOs, also experienced delayed integration during the early years of KLA implementation, which weakened trust building at the outset. As there is no structured mechanism for reflection, evaluation of working relationships, or collaborative learning, trust tends to be fragile and is easily disrupted when responsibilities overlap or when cross-sector expectations are unmet. Consequently, trust-building remains limited and heavily reliant on DP3A's coordinating authority.

4.4.3 Commitment to the Process

Commitment to the collaborative process varies across actors and is closely linked to the strength of alignment between their institutional mandates and KLA indicators. Agencies in sectors with historically strong child-related responsibilities, such as Health, Education, and Social Affairs, show greater consistency in attending meetings and preparing evaluative evidence. However, many actors demonstrate a form of commitment that is primarily administrative rather than strategic; they participate to fulfill obligations tied to KLA scoring rather than out of shared ownership of child-focused outcomes. This tendency is reflected in OPD statements indicating that they "follow what has been directed in the RAD" or "carry out what is instructed by DP3A," highlighting that participation is driven more by compliance than by initiative. At the sub-district and village levels, commitment is similarly rooted in adherence to instructions rather than in proactive innovation.

Local officials often emphasize that they “adjust activities based on capacity” while still adhering to the city’s predetermined framework, signaling limited engagement beyond the minimum requirements. Although non-government actors such as APSAI and community organizations show moral commitment to children’s welfare, their involvement remains episodic because of the absence of structured mechanisms for sustained participation. Because role negotiation and shared decision-making processes were minimal during the early formation of KLA structures, many actors do not perceive themselves as co-owners of the policy, resulting in commitment that is present but not instrumental.

4.4.4 Shared Understanding

A shared understanding across actors remains fragmented and is influenced by sectoral interpretations of KLA. Although stakeholders generally acknowledge the importance of fulfilling children’s rights, their conceptualization of the KLA framework varies depending on their assigned responsibilities. For example, some OPD perceive the KLA as the fulfillment of technical indicators within their program domain, such as health services, legal identity, or safe school environments, rather than as a comprehensive governance approach requiring cross-sector integration. This fragmentation is reinforced by DP3A’s central role in framing the policy, which inadvertently positions other actors as implementers of a predefined agenda rather than co-constructors of shared meaning.

The limited depth of face-to-face dialogue also contributes to the absence of collective sense-making in virtual meetings. Key forums rarely engage in systemic problem-framing exercises that could lead to a unified understanding of child-related challenges in Bandung, such as disparities in service access between regions, gaps in special protection, and inconsistent child participation across administrative levels. Although child forums are formally present, their perspectives are not systematically incorporated into deliberative processes, further weakening the possibility of a child-centered, shared understanding. Consequently, shared understanding remains technically oriented and compliance-driven rather than holistic, integrative, and grounded in children’s lived experiences.

4.4.5 Intermediate Outcomes

Intermediate outcomes in Bandung’s collaborative governance process have emerged, but they remain limited to administrative and procedural achievements, rather than deeper collaborative innovation. On the positive side, KLA implementation has contributed to stronger awareness among OPD of child rights obligations, improved documentation practices for national evaluation, and occasional cross-sector coordination, especially in addressing special protection cases. The annual evaluation cycle also stimulates temporary bursts of collaborative activity, particularly during the evidence collection and cluster performance monitoring.

However, these outcomes remain episodic and are tied to assessment timelines rather than representing sustained improvements in cross-sector collaboration. The absence of jointly developed programs, long-term integrated planning, or co-created innovations indicates that intermediate outcomes have not matured into drivers of collaborative transformation. Because many of these outcomes emerge only in response to evaluation demands, they do not reinforce cumulative motivation or collective ownership among the actors. Instead, they ensure administrative stability without fundamentally altering collaborative dynamics or strengthening the governance system’s capacity to address complex child welfare challenges.

4.5 Collaborative Outcomes

The collaborative outcomes of Bandung City’s KLA implementation reflect the cumulative effects of its initial conditions, institutional design, leadership, and collaborative processes. While the governance structure has succeeded in producing several administrative and procedural achievements, the overall pattern of outcomes remains limited in terms of depth and uneven across sectors. The findings indicate that the collaboration has generated outputs that support compliance with national KLA requirements but has not yet produced the systemic, cross-sectoral, and child-centered outcomes envisioned in the collaborative governance theory.

At the city level, Bandung has demonstrated measurable progress in certain KLA clusters, particularly those supported by established programmatic mandates such as health, education, and civil registration. The OPD in these clusters routinely meets indicator requirements and submits complete documentation for national evaluation. Improvements are also observable in internal reporting routines, the consistency of evidence submission, and the strengthening of administrative mechanisms, such as cluster coordination meetings and periodic monitoring. These achievements represent positive institutional outputs, consistent with Ansell and Gash's notion that early administrative outcomes often emerge in settings where collaboration is structured primarily around compliance and leadership.

However, the outcomes were uneven across the clusters. The most notable weakness appears in the cluster related to KLA implementation at the sub-district and village levels, where Bandung shows a performance gap exceeding 30 points. This poor performance reflects the absence of localized operational guidelines, inconsistent dissemination of policy responsibilities, and limited collaborative capacity among regional actors. The outcome gap at the territorial level is a direct manifestation of earlier institutional shortcomings—particularly the lack of ground rules, minimal co-creation of guidelines, and weak facilitative leadership at lower administrative tiers. Thus, the outcomes indicate not only performance shortcomings but also structural inequities in collaborative readiness across governance levels.

In terms of cross-sectoral outcomes, collaboration has produced several instances of joint action, especially in handling complex child-protection cases. These cases often require coordination between Social Affairs, Health, Education, police, and community organizations. Although such collaborations do occur, the study reveals that they are largely reactive rather than sustained, emerging primarily during crises rather than through a stable cross-sectoral service system. This aligns with the broader pattern that collaborative outcomes are event-driven rather than institutionalized, constrained by the lack of a robust shared understanding and the limited depth of trust-building among actors. The outcomes demonstrate operational coordination rather than systemic integration.

Furthermore, Bandung has not yet achieved collaborative outcomes in the form of co-created programs or innovations that are specifically designed to address child welfare issues. Most initiatives remain rooted in sectoral mandates and are adapted from pre-existing programs rather than being jointly formulated through cross-sectoral deliberation. The absence of co-developed interventions indicates that the collaborative governance system has not matured into a platform for shared policymaking. The limited involvement of private-sector actors and NGOs in program design further reinforces the impression that collaborative outcomes have not expanded beyond administrative mandates. Child participation outcomes were also modest. While child forums are formally recognized and periodically involved in public campaigns or ceremonial events, their input has not been translated into policy decisions or program adaptations yet. Children's perspectives are not systematically incorporated into KLA planning, monitoring or evaluation processes. As a result, the intended outcome of meaningful child participation—one of the core pillars of the KLA—has not yet been realized. The persistence of symbolic participation signals that the collaborative environment has not succeeded in redistributing influence to children as policy stakeholders.

Intermediate achievements, such as improved documentation quality, heightened awareness of children's rights among OPD, and more structured coordination mechanisms, demonstrate that collaboration has produced administrative gains, but these gains have not evolved into transformative outcomes. Transformative outcomes, such as integrated child protection systems, durable cross-sector service pipelines, institutionalized child participation, or localized governance innovations, remain largely absent. This is consistent with the finding that earlier collaborative processes were limited by insufficient dialogue, inconsistent commitment, fragmented understanding and shallow trust. When foundational collaborative processes are weak, outcomes tend to reflect compliance rather than co-governance.

Overall, the collaborative outcomes in Bandung revealed a pattern of administrative effectiveness but limited collaborative transformation. The city can meet the technical KLA requirements and maintain

operational coordination; however, the deeper aspirations of collaborative governance—shared ownership, integrated service delivery, collective innovation, and inclusive participation—have not yet materialized. These outcomes reflect the cumulative consequences of hierarchical initial conditions, incomplete institutional design, limited leadership facilitation, and procedural collaborative processes. Thus, Bandung's KLA policy currently produces outputs rather than outcomes and performance rather than shared value, indicating significant potential for future strengthening.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to analyze the implementation of collaborative governance in the Child-Friendly City (KLA) policy in Bandung City using Ansell and Gash's framework, focusing on initial conditions, institutional design, facilitative leadership, and collaborative processes. The findings reveal that although Bandung has established formal institutional structures and demonstrated administrative commitment to KLA implementation, collaborative governance remains limited in depth and effectiveness. Initial conditions are largely shaped by hierarchical mandates rather than co-initiated collaboration, resulting in power imbalances, limited early engagement and gradual trust development. Institutional design is formally comprehensive but lacks operational internalization, particularly at the sub-district and village levels, and does not fully support the inclusive participation of non-government actors and children.

Facilitative leadership is predominantly administrative and directive, with a limited capacity to foster sustained interaction and shared ownership among stakeholders. The collaborative process is characterized by procedural engagement rather than deliberative and co-creative interaction, leading to fragmented coordination and weak shared understanding. Consequently, collaborative outcomes are primarily administrative, reflected in reporting improvements and partial indicator fulfilment, rather than transformative outcomes such as integrated service systems, sustained cross-sector collaboration, or meaningful child participation. These findings indicate that the KLA policy's effectiveness in Bandung is strongly influenced by the quality of its collaborative governance foundations. Strengthening collaboration requires improving early stage engagement, institutionalizing cross-sector coordination mechanisms, enhancing facilitative leadership capacity, and ensuring the inclusive and meaningful participation of all stakeholders, particularly children. Without these improvements, collaboration risks remain procedural and cannot effectively address complex child protection challenges.

5.2 Research Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, it focuses solely on Bandung City, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other regions with different institutional capacities and sociopolitical contexts. Second, the research relies on qualitative data from selected OPD, NGOs, private-sector actors, and child forums; therefore, the insights reflect the perspectives of actors directly involved in KLA processes and may not capture broader institutional or community-level perceptions. Third, this study analyzes collaborative governance at a specific period in the policy cycle, which may not fully represent long-term dynamics or future developments. Additionally, the research does not include a quantitative assessment of program outcomes, which could complement the qualitative findings and provide a more comprehensive evaluation of KLA effectiveness in the future.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several recommendations can be proposed. First, Bandung City should strengthen co-initiation mechanisms by ensuring that all stakeholders, including OPD, NGOs, private-sector partners, and child forums, are involved from the earliest stages of planning and problem framing. This would help build a shared ownership and balanced power relations. Second, institutional design must be extended downward by developing operational guidelines for sub-districts and villages, clarifying their roles, and enabling the localized adaptation of KLA principles. Third, facilitative leadership should be cultivated across all administrative levels through capacity-building programs that focus on mediation, cross-sector communication, and collaborative decision-making.

Moreover, the collaborative process can be improved by creating routine deliberative forums that go beyond administrative reporting, enabling actors to collectively analyze child-related issues, evaluate ongoing efforts, and design integrated interventions. Non-government actors and children should be positioned as substantive contributors rather than symbolic participants, with structured mechanisms ensuring that their perspectives are incorporated into policy decisions. Finally, to achieve stronger collaborative outcomes, Bandung City should prioritize co-created programs and long-term collaborative initiatives that address systemic child welfare challenges, moving beyond compliance-driven output toward meaningful child-centered governance.

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Author Contributions

YR contributed to the conceptualization of the study, research methodology, data analysis, and preparation of the original draft of the manuscript. ES contributed to supervision, validation, and critical review of the manuscript. AR contributed to investigation and provision of research resources, while NN contributed to writing, review, and editing of the manuscript. The authors remain deeply appreciative of the support extended by colleagues, practitioners, and all stakeholders who shared their time and perspectives during the data collection. All authors contributed to refining the manuscript and approved the final version for publication.

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