

Collective Impact in the Implementation of Affirmative Economic Policy for Indigenous Papuans: Evidence from Sorong City, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT:

Affirmative economic policies for Indigenous Papuans (OAP) in Sorong City have been implemented through empowerment programmes, business legalisation, capital access, and skills training. Despite achieving 80.8% of programme output targets, OAP poverty remains at 48.2% in 2024 against a target of 43.8%, while access to formal markets stagnates at 8.7%, indicating a critical output-outcome paradox rooted in weak collaborative architecture rather than insufficient programmes. This study analyses the implementation of affirmative economic policy for OAP in Sorong City through Kania and Kramer's (2011) five-dimensional Collective Impact framework: common agenda, shared measurement, mutually-reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone organisation. A qualitative descriptive approach was conducted in Sorong City. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 16 purposively-selected informants representing local government, the Moi Customary Council, OAP business actors, NGOs, and SOEs, complemented by participant observation of coordination forums and document analysis. Thematic analysis was structured around the five Collective Impact dimensions. All five preconditions for Collective Impact operate weakly. The common agenda exists only formally without shared diagnosis. Measurement systems are fragmented and output-biased. Activities run in sectoral silos without sequencing: only 25% of OAP business actors attend coordination forums, and only 2% of forum time is spent on strategy dialogue. Communication is top-down with information-sharing dominating 70% of forum time. The backbone organisation (MRP) operates with only Rp 250 million annual budget (3% of programme budget), producing capacity gaps of 7–8.5 points across six of seven core functions. Implementation has not produced strong collective impact due to weak orchestration. The five preconditions form an interlocking circle of mutual weakening rather than mutual reinforcement. Strengthening requires building a common agenda based on collective diagnosis, outcome-oriented shared measurement, integrated activity sequencing, dialogic communication, and a well-resourced, neutral backbone organization.

Keywords: collective impact; affirmative policy; indigenous economy

Introduction. Affirmative policy under the Papua Special Autonomy framework was designed to correct long-standing structural inequalities experienced by Indigenous Papuans (Orang Asli Papua, OAP), including in the economic dimension. In Sorong City, affirmative policy has produced empowerment programmes, business legalisation facilitation, capital access support, and skills training. Yet impact remains limited: OAP poverty stands at 51.7% against 12.8% for non-OAP populations, and most OAP entrepreneurs remain trapped in the informal sector with low productivity and severely limited access to capital, product certification, and formal market networks.

This failure cannot be explained by resource scarcity alone. In implementation literature, the failure of cross-sectoral policy typically stems from weak inter-actor coordination and absent integration mechanisms (Cejudo & Trein, 2023). When policy involves multiple actors with fragmented authority, success is determined less by input magnitude than by the system's capacity to integrate collective action coherently. Berardo et al. (2020) argue that in collaborative governance, programme effectiveness depends on actor-network capacity to build shared understanding, exchange information, and coordinate activities synergistically. Ostrom (1990) further demonstrates that managing complex collective problems requires shared rules, agreed-upon monitoring mechanisms, and institutions capable of enforcing inter-party commitment.

Five interlocking issues mark affirmative policy in Sorong City. First, no substantive common agenda exists: each agency defines OAP economic empowerment according to its own mandate rather than a shared diagnosis. Second, no shared measurement system operates: each institution reports through its own indicators without integration. Third, activities are not mutually-reinforcing: programmes overlap in some areas while leaving service gaps in others, with fragmentation between vertical and horizontal authorities. Fourth, continuous communication remains shallow: forums exist

but operate as one-way reporting rather than substantive dialogue. Fifth, the backbone organisation—the Papuan People's Council (MRP) Secretariat—operates with severely constrained resources and authority, limiting its catalytic function.

Although implementation literature on Papua's affirmative policy is expanding, few studies have integratively operationalised Sakmaf & Karauwan (2024) Collective Impact framework in a setting where state institutions, customary councils, and indigenous business actors intersect as in Sorong City. Existing studies typically focus on programme outputs without diagnosing the collaborative architecture that converts programmes into collective impact. This study addresses that gap by providing a holistic diagnostic of the five Collective Impact preconditions, supported by quantitative-visual evidence on the output-outcome paradox, fragmentation patterns, and backbone capacity. The objective is to analyse how Collective Impact operates across common agenda, shared measurement, mutually-reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone organisation in affirmative economic policy implementation.

2. Theoretical Framework

Public policy implementation theory has evolved from emphasis on policy content (Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975) toward bureaucratic execution (Lipsky (1980) and finally toward cross-actor collaboration (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Several theoretical strands address collective action in complex social problems. Olson (1965) showed that collective action requires selective incentives and institutional structures. (Ostrom, 1990) emphasised shared rules and agreed monitoring. (Torfing, 2023) highlighted that fragmentation of interests in polycentric systems inherently produces coordination failure. These approaches, while theoretically robust, remain primarily explanatory rather than operational for diagnosing cross-actor coordination failure.

(Panjwani et al., 2023a) Collective Impact framework distinguishes itself by operationalising

collective-action preconditions into five measurable conditions that function simultaneously as diagnostic framework and intervention guide. These are: (1) common agenda—shared understanding of the problem and joint strategic action; (2) shared measurement system—agreed indicators and consistent data collection for collective learning; (3) mutually-reinforcing activities—actor-specific contributions designed to complement rather than duplicate; (4) continuous communication—regular, open, and transparent dialogue; and (5) backbone support organisation—a neutral coordinator with clear mandate, adequate resources, technical capacity, and cross-sector legitimacy.

Recent literature confirms Collective Impact's analytical advantages in fragmented institutional contexts. de Morais Holanda (2025) demonstrate Collective Impact's superior operational utility over classical frameworks in institutional fragmentation. Casula (2024) confirm that measurable conditions produce higher coordination accountability in multilevel governance. (PROUCHET, 2025) establish that backbone organisation strength is the critical variable determining success in affirmative policy for marginalised groups in developing countries. Together these studies position Collective Impact as the most operationally precise framework for diagnosing affirmative policy implementation challenges in plural-institutional settings.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach analysing how Collective Impact principles operate in affirmative economic policy implementation for OAP in Sorong City. Sorong City was selected because it constitutes a strategic arena where local government, the Moi Customary Council, OAP business actors, and supporting organisations converge in a complex policy field. Sixteen informants were purposively selected based on direct involvement, substantive knowledge, and position in policy implementation: five from local government/OPD, two from the Moi Customary Council, five OAP business actors, two from

NGOs and accompanying organisations, and two from SOEs and financial institutions.

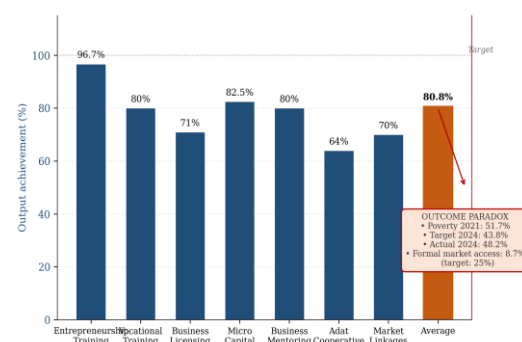
Data collection comprised in-depth interviews, participant observation of cross-sectoral coordination forums, inter-implementer meetings, and OAP economic empowerment activities, and documentary study of policy documents, programme reports, inter-agency coordination reports, and regional planning documents. Thematic analysis proceeded through data reduction, categorisation across the five Collective Impact dimensions, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Validity was maintained through source and method triangulation. Ethical clearance was obtained from [Ethics Committee Name and Number], with informed consent secured for all informants and particular attention to free, prior, and informed consent in engaging Indigenous communities.

Results

The Output-Outcome Paradox

Before examining each dimension, it is essential to identify the puzzle this study addresses. Programme outputs have been delivered with reasonable efficiency: across seven major programmes implemented between 2021 and 2024, the average output achievement reached 80.8%, with entrepreneurship training reaching 96.7% of targeted participants. Yet outcomes have stagnated or worsened. Figure 1 visualises this paradox.

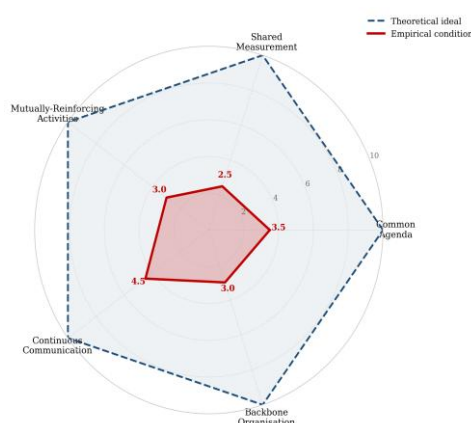
Figure 1. Programme output achievement versus outcome stagnation in OAP economic policy implementation, 2021–2024



Source: Compiled from Sorong City government annual reports, NGO programme reports, and field observation, 2025

Figure 1 reveals the paradox's magnitude. Programme outputs averaged 80.8% achievement, yet OAP poverty fell only from 51.7% (2021) to 48.2% (2024) against a target of 43.8%; access to formal markets reached merely 8.7% against a 25% target; and the informal sector share remained at 82.1% against a 65% target. This decoupling between output achievement and outcome transformation is the central empirical puzzle. The remaining sections diagnose this paradox through the five Collective Impact dimensions, culminating in Figure 2's composite assessment.

Figure 2. Collective Impact diagnostic: theoretical ideal versus empirical condition across five preconditions



Source: Thematic coding scores from interviews, observation, and document analysis, 2025

Figure 2 maps the systemic deficit. All five preconditions score between 2.5 and 4.5 against a theoretical ideal of 10—continuous communication scores highest (4.5) yet remains below half of ideal, while shared measurement scores lowest (2.5). Crucially, no single dimension is approaching adequacy, indicating that this is not a problem of one weak link but of an immature collective-action system.

4.2 Common Agenda

The common agenda exists only formally. Sorong City's 2024–2025 Regional Government Work

Plan articulates three pillars for OAP welfare improvement—business empowerment, capital access, and skills training—but interpretations vary significantly across actors. The Trade and Industry Office understands empowerment as mass training and certification, targeting 2,000 OAP entrepreneurs annually. The Moi Customary Council interprets the same agenda as appreciation of traditional economic practices and integration of modernisation with cultural preservation. OAP business actors prioritise direct capital and market access over theoretical training. These divergences are not openly antagonistic but produce different programme priorities and uncoordinated resource allocation.

Documentation of the 2023 Special Autonomy Development Planning Forum reveals that the economic agenda remained general and did not reflect a shared diagnosis of root causes. Targets were set—15% income increase over two years—without preceding analysis of why 51.7% of OAP remain in poverty, what structural factors drive this, or how diagnosis should shape intervention design. Agenda formation workshops occurred, but participation was uneven: government and selected NGOs attended consistently, while OAP business actors and customary council representatives attended sporadically. The agenda formation process itself did not reflect inclusive deliberation, undermining the substantive shared understanding that Pfeffer (2024) identify as essential.

4.3 Shared Measurement System

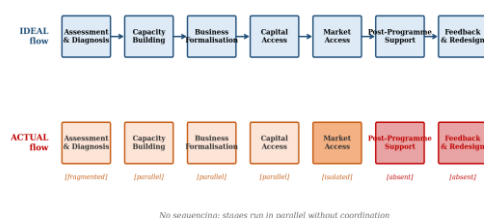
The shared measurement system is largely absent. Each sector operates uncoordinated measurement systems. The Trade and Industry Office tracks training participants, certified businesses, and sales-revenue increases, focusing on outputs rather than outcomes. Documentation of three consecutive years shows that participant targets were met, but data on post-programme business survival or sustainable income increases is unavailable in official monitoring. The Community Empowerment Office relies on ad-hoc qualitative documentation. NGOs maintain their own outcome-focused tracking that is never integrated

with government systems. Customary institutions use embedded qualitative indicators with no formal measurement framework. There is no joint platform consolidating data, no shared analytical process, and no systematic mechanism by which data informs collaborative course-correction. Coordination forums report sectoral achievements but do not produce joint data analysis or strategic adjustment decisions, confirming Panjwani et al. (2023) diagnosis of single-loop learning without paradigmatic change.

4.4 Mutually-Reinforcing Activities

Approximately 12 major programmes for OAP economic empowerment operate in Sorong City, involving local government, NGOs, and the customary council. With an aggregate annual budget of approximately Rp 8 billion, these activities show extensive overlap in targeting (the same business actors enrolled in multiple programmes without coordinated design) and significant gaps in coverage. Role clarity remains underdeveloped: while general understanding of stakeholder involvement exists, no explicit agreement defines unique contributions across the empowerment ecosystem. Some aspects are addressed by multiple actors (creating redundancy), while others receive no attention (creating service gaps). Figure 3 visualises the sequencing failure that lies at the heart of activity fragmentation.

Figure 3. Sequencing of OAP economic empowerment programmes: ideal logical framework versus actual parallel implementation



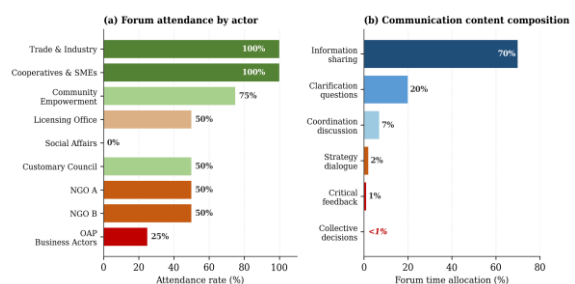
Source: Analysis of programme logical frameworks and field observation, 2025

Figure 3 captures the operational gap. An ideal logical framework would proceed through seven sequential stages: collective assessment, capacity building, business formalisation, capital access, market access, post-programme support, and feedback-based redesign. In actual implementation, these stages run in parallel without coordination: assessment is fragmented across actors, capacity building, formalisation, and capital access proceed simultaneously without sequencing, market access remains isolated and reaches only 200 participants, while post-programme support and feedback-redesign are entirely absent. This sequencing failure explains why beneficiaries report being overwhelmed by uncoordinated programme demands while critical support stages—particularly post-programme accompaniment and market linkages—remain unaddressed. The decoupling between modern-formal economic programmes and traditional-subsistence programmes operated by customary institutions further deepens fragmentation, leaving OAP business actors interested in hybrid models without coherent institutional support.

4.5 Continuous Communication

Communication occurs across multiple venues with sharply differing characteristics. The Inter-Agency Coordination Forum, while convening monthly with systematic documentation, operates as top-down information transmission rather than substantive dialogue. Figure 4 reveals two structural problems: asymmetric participation and asymmetric content.

Figure 4. Participation and communication structure in OAP economic policy coordination forums, 2023–2024



Source: Forum attendance records and minutes analysis, 2025

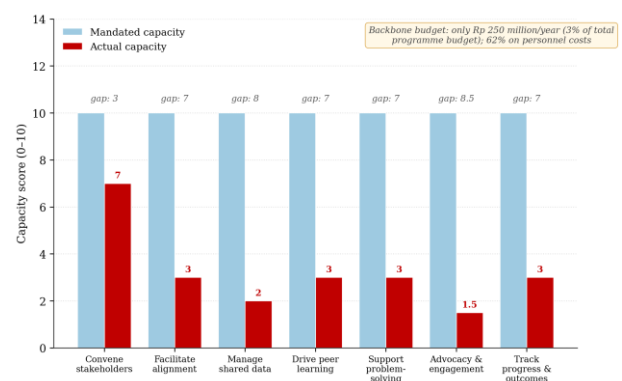
Figure 4(a) shows that core government agencies attend forums with 100% consistency, while OAP business actors—the primary beneficiaries—attend only 25% of forums, and Social Affairs is entirely absent. Figure 4(b) reveals that even when forums convene, 70% of forum time is allocated to information sharing and 20% to clarification questions, while substantive strategy dialogue receives only 2% and critical feedback receives less than 1%. Collective decision-making is effectively absent. This communication asymmetry reflects a tokenistic pattern of participation, in which actors may be formally included but their involvement does not translate into meaningful redistribution of decision-making power (Jánová et al., 2025; Ramos et al., 2026). It also falls short of contemporary standards of representative deliberation, which require broadly inclusive participation, evidence-informed dialogue, equal opportunities to contribute, and clear follow-up mechanisms that connect deliberative inputs to public decision-making (Bussu et al., 2022; Eight Ways to Institutionalise Deliberative Democracy, 2021). Substantive coordination conversations often occur informally in corridors and bilateral meetings rather than in formal forums; however, when these informal exchanges involve only a small subset of actors and are not documented or transmitted to the broader collaboration, they risk narrowing rather than expanding meaningful participation (Bussu et al., 2022; Cairney & Toomey, 2024a).

4.6 Backbone Organisation

The MRP Secretariat has been positioned as the backbone organisation for Special Autonomy coordination, yet it operates under severe capacity constraints. With only five to seven staff members and an annual budget of approximately Rp 250 million—equivalent to only 3% of the total programme budget of Rp 8 billion—the Secretariat has limited organisational capacity to perform substantive coordination. Moreover, 62% of its budget is absorbed by personnel expenditure, leaving only a marginal allocation

for facilitation activities, technical assistance, monitoring support, and data-system development. The mandate is also institutionally ambiguous. Although the Secretariat is formally tasked with “coordinating Special Autonomy policy implementation,” it lacks the authority to direct, discipline, or override agency-level decisions. Its embedded position within the local government bureaucracy further constrains its ability to function as a neutral facilitator, whereas recent collective-impact and collaborative-governance literature emphasises that effective backbone organisations require dedicated staffing, facilitative leadership, role clarity, shared measurement capacity, adequate resources, and the ability to coordinate actors through horizontal rather than hierarchical authority (Derrien et al., 2024; Mongeon et al., 2025; Samari & Schmitz, 2024; Virtanen et al., 2021). Figure 5 maps this mandate–capacity gap across the core backbone functions identified in recent collective-impact scholarship, including agenda alignment, partner coordination, continuous communication, shared measurement, technical facilitation, resource mobilisation, and distributed collaborative leadership.

Figure 5. Mandate-capacity gap in the backbone organisation across seven core functions



Source: Analysis of MRP Secretariat organisational structure, budget documents, and function implementation, 2025

Figure 5 documents that only the convening function (score 7/10) approaches adequacy, while the other six functions—facilitating alignment, managing shared data, driving peer

learning, supporting problem-solving, advocacy and engagement, and tracking progress—score between 1.5 and 3 against a mandated capacity of 10, producing capacity gaps of 7 to 8.5 points. The backbone can schedule meetings and document decisions but cannot drive substantive alignment, manage shared measurement, facilitate strategic problem-solving, or sustain outcome-focused accountability. Staff turnover

further erodes institutional memory: key coordinator positions have changed twice in three years, disrupting the continuity essential for backbone effectiveness.

4.7 Synthesis

Table 1 summarises findings across the five Collective Impact dimensions.

Table 1. Summary of findings across Collective Impact dimensions in Sorong City

Dimension	Principal Finding
Common agenda	Formal agenda exists but lacks shared diagnosis; sectoral interpretations diverge among Trade & Industry (mass certification), Community Empowerment (sustainability), Moi Customary Council (traditional integration), and OAP actors (direct capital/market access).
Shared measurement	Measurement is fragmented and output-biased; no joint platform integrates data; outcome indicators (sustainability, market linkage, poverty reduction) are systematically absent from official monitoring.
Mutually-reinforcing activities	12 programmes (Rp 8 billion annual budget) operate without sequencing; assessment, capacity building, capital access, and market access run in parallel; post-programme support and feedback-redesign are entirely absent.
Continuous communication	Forums are top-down: 70% of time on information sharing, only 2% on strategy, <1% on critical feedback; OAP business actors attend only 25% of forums; substantive coordination occurs informally with limited transmission.
Backbone organisation	MRP Secretariat operates with Rp 250 million annual budget (3% of programme budget), 62% on personnel; capacity gaps of 7–8.5 across six of seven core functions; positioned within bureaucracy, compromising neutrality.

Source: Thematic analysis results

, 2025

5. Discussion

The findings reveal that affirmative economic policy in Sorong City confronts a systemic, interlocking problem rather than a sum of separate deficiencies. (Santos et al., 2021) argue that effective collective action emerges only when the five preconditions operate synergistically; the findings demonstrate that none operates adequately, and the absence of one directly weakens others in a self-reinforcing cycle. The absent substantive common agenda undermines shared measurement because actors cannot agree

on what to measure without first agreeing on what they are trying to achieve. Weak shared measurement obscures activity coordination because actors lack a common language for tracking progress. Uncoordinated activities deepen communication dysfunction because actors approach forums with incompatible programme realities. And dysfunctional communication leaves the backbone organisation operating without the collective legitimacy required to orchestrate substantive change.

The output-outcome paradox (Figure 1) is the most consequential empirical signal. Programme

outputs averaging 80.8% achievement coexist with poverty reduction from 51.7% to only 48.2% (against a target of 43.8%) and formal market access stagnating at 8.7% (against a target of 25%). This pattern aligns with what Howlett (2012) describes as fragmented policy systems that repeat the same errors because learning is not shared across units, and with Argyris and Schön's (1978) characterisation of single-loop learning that produces technical adjustments without paradigmatic change. The five-dimensional diagnostic in Figure 2 explains the paradox: a system that scores between 2.5 and 4.5 on all preconditions cannot translate programme outputs into sustainable outcomes regardless of input magnitude.

The sequencing failure documented in Figure 3 illustrates how policy fragmentation reproduces inefficiency in programme implementation. Recent collaborative governance literature shows that collaboration does not automatically generate collective action; it requires clear rules, defined roles, adequate resources, shared knowledge, leadership, and institutional arrangements capable of aligning actors across organisational boundaries (Belrhiti et al., 2024; Cairney & Toomey, 2024b; Wang & Ran, 2023). In this sense, Sorong City has not yet developed the institutional capacity needed to convert fragmented activities into mutually reinforcing interventions. Capital assistance is provided before participants are sufficiently prepared, contributing to a 12% default rate, while trained and formalised participants remain weakly connected to markets because the linkage programme reaches only 200 people out of thousands of trained participants. This pattern indicates not merely a technical sequencing problem, but a deeper coordination failure in which training, capital provision, formalisation, and market linkage operate as disconnected programme components rather than as an integrated collaborative pathway (Beeton et al., 2024; Cairney & Toomey, 2024).

Theoretically, three frameworks together explain the empirical pattern. Kania and Kramer (2011) identify what is not working—five preconditions

failing to operate synergistically. (Ostrom, 1990) explains why structurally—polycentric systems involving local government, the Moi Customary Council, SOEs, NGOs, and OAP business actors inherently produce coordination fragmentation when institutional preconditions (collective rules, monitoring mechanisms, local institutional autonomy) are not simultaneously satisfied. (Diani, 2024) explains why formal mechanisms fail despite their availability: trust deficit shifts collective action from being technically possible to socially obstructed. Without trust transitioning from interpersonal to institutional levels, collective action cannot materialise even when formal coordination structures and Collective Impact preconditions are nominally in place.

Practically, the findings suggest five priorities: (1) building common agenda through inclusive collective diagnostic workshops engaging customary council, OAP business actors, and government on equal footing; (2) developing outcome-oriented shared measurement systems integrated across actors with joint data platforms; (3) restructuring activity sequencing through coordinated logical frameworks ensuring assessment precedes capacity building, formalisation precedes capital, and post-programme support is systematically resourced; (4) transforming forum communication through structured deliberative protocols guaranteeing minimum time for strategy dialogue and critical feedback; and (5) substantially strengthening backbone capacity through dedicated budget allocations (minimum 8–10% of programme budget), clear authority mandates, structural independence from operational bureaucracy, and staff specialisation in facilitation, data management, and change management.

Limitations include the single-case design, which provides analytical depth but limits statistical generalisation; comparative studies across other Special Autonomy jurisdictions would strengthen external validity. Capacity scores are derived from thematic coding rather than independent organisational audits; future research could triangulate with formal capacity assessments. The cross-sectional design captures one point in time;

longitudinal research could trace how Collective Impact strengthening interventions reshape outcomes over a 5–10 year horizon consistent with Henig et al.'s (2016) findings.

5. Conclusion

Collective Impact in OAP affirmative economic policy implementation in Sorong City has not produced strong collective impact because all five preconditions operate weakly and reinforce each other's weaknesses. Despite the existence of formal forums, policy documents, and a designated coordinating unit, collaboration substance remains shallow: a common agenda exists only formally without shared diagnosis; measurement systems are fragmented and output-biased; activities operate in sectoral silos with critical sequencing gaps; communication is dominated by top-down information sharing (70% of forum time) with negligible strategy dialogue (2%) and critical feedback (<1%); and the backbone organisation operates with severe resource constraints (Rp 250 million annual budget, 3% of programme budget) and capacity gaps of 7–8.5 points across six of seven core functions.

The result is the output-outcome paradox: programme outputs averaging 80.8% achievement coexist with poverty reduction from 51.7% to only 48.2% (target 43.8%), formal market access at 8.7% (target 25%), and informal sector share at 82.1% (target 65%). The principal barrier is not insufficient programmes or inadequate resources but an immature collective-action system in which the five preconditions

form an interlocking circle of mutual weakening rather than mutual reinforcement. The Collective Impact framework proves useful as a diagnostic for collaboration preconditions but must be complemented by polycentric governance analysis (Ostrom) and trust-deficit analysis (Schedler) to fully explain implementation contexts marked by power asymmetries, institutional differences, capacity constraints, and political-cultural dynamics. Strengthening collective impact requires simultaneous transformation across all five dimensions, anchored by substantial investment in backbone organisation capacity and authentic deliberative processes that redistribute decision-making power to OAP business actors and the Moi Customary Council.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Data Availability Statement

Qualitative data supporting this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to ethical restrictions protecting informant identities.

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