

MAMPU LEARNING SERIES

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

What are the problems and why do these problems exist?

- 1 Low women's workforce participation: **Female labour force participation rate in Indonesia is around 51%** (Susenas, 2013), and has been stagnant since the 1990s. (source: AIPEG, 2017)



Why is this problem important:

Women's participation in the paid economy has important impacts on development at the micro and macro levels:



It increases GDP at the national level.

(source: World Bank, 2012)



More resources allocated to food, children's education and healthcare at the household level.

(source: Morrison et al, 2007)



It also has important impacts on the woman herself; studies show that women who engage in paid work (conditional on education) are more empowered.

(source: Schaner and Theys, 2020)

Why this problem exists:



Social and cultural expectations about women's domestic responsibilities



Lack of facilities and services like childcare and flexible working hours



Availability and affordability of these services



The availability of work (especially for rural women).

- 2 As a result of the above, **some women chose to earn money in the informal economy**, which has its own set of problems: its often unprofitable (employers have no obligation to pay minimum wage), unsafe (safety standards are not enforced) and exploitative (contracts are rare).



Why this problem exists:

Lack of regulation from the government and lack of accountability in the private sector.



How have MAMPU partners addressed these issues?

MAMPU partners have worked with homeworkers (TURC, Yasanti and BITRA) to gain legal recognition and migrant and ex-migrant workers (Migrant Care) to enable safe migration and reintegration upon return.



MAMPU PARTNER ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT INTERVENTIONS (THEORY OF ACTION)

SOCIAL ASSETS (POWER WITH)

- Friends
- Social networks
- Mentors
- Group membership
- Links to village governments
- Links to district government/service providers
- Links with civil society

ENABLING ASSETS

- Identity card
- Legal, policy and rights frameworks
- Transport (including safety)
- Time saving infrastructure
- Child care



HUMAN ASSETS (POWER WITHIN)

- Health (access to healthcare and information)
- Education
- Literacy and numeracy
- Financial literacy
- Knowledge of human and legal rights
- Skills useful for finding work
- Self-esteem and self-confidence

AGENCY ASSETS (POWER TO)

- Participate in economic decisions within the family
- Engage in community decision-making
- Access services and social protection
- Access jobs/create income opportunities
- Engage with markets (including employers & agencies)

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE ASSETS (CONTROL)

- Cash/income
- Savings
- Access to loans
- Equipment
- Input (seeds, fertilisers, raw materials)
- Livestock
- Stock (inventory)
- Business and market information

These four MAMPU partners focused on social assets as an entry point, establishing homeworker and migrant worker groups to connect group members to each other, other organisations, and the local government. These groups then formed the basis for interventions to increase human assets (knowledge, skills and self-efficacy), improve agency assets (supporting access to social protection, government services and training) and enhance finance and resource assets (creating savings and loans groups). To increase enabling assets, the partners also drew on these groups to contribute their voices and experience to the campaign for legal reform and, in the case of Migrant Care, establish a new service (called DESBUMI) to support safe migration.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Related to design and management of economic empowerment interventions

Lesson 1:

Economic empowerment programs and activities require a flexible approach that allows for learning and adaptation throughout implementation

Lesson 2:

Income generation is only one aspect of economic empowerment and the degree of emphasis on income generation will vary across programs and projects, depending on the context and intended outcomes.

Recommendation 1:

Development programs to provide conceptual framework to support and structure the design of interventions at both the program and project level.

Recommendation 2:

Development actors establish a clear, holistic definition of what constitutes economic empowerment (and the role of income generation) in the context of the program or project

Related to the characteristics and contexts of target groups

Lesson 3:

Entrepreneurship is not suitable for everyone and the skills, attitudes and preferences of women should be taken into account before selecting entrepreneurship as an intervention.

Lesson 4:

Flexibility of working hours is a key criteria for many Indonesian rural women in relation to economic activities, often trumping other criteria such as pay and conditions.

Recommendation 3:

Involve women in the design and selection of economic empowerment activities, being transparent about the pros and cons of various options, as well as potential future challenges

Lesson 5:

Involving men in women's economic empowerment activities increases support for women's participation and provides opportunities to address male attitudes towards gender.

Recommendation 4:

Identify ways to involve men at various points during the implementation process to help build support for women's empowerment activities as well as addressing attitudes towards gender.

Related to collaboration with the private sector

Lesson 6:

Understanding the needs and gaps in the market should be a main consideration when identifying an enterprise opportunity.

Lesson 7:

Collaborations between the private sector and civil society organisations can be mutually beneficial and can complement both party's respective strengths and weakness.

Lesson 8:

Private sector collaboration is not suitable for all civil society organisations, particularly those with strong advocacy agendas in opposition to the private sector.

Recommendation 5:

Programs and (where appropriate) projects collaborate with the private sector (including social enterprises) to strengthen interventions and add capacity.

Recommendation 6:

Programs can play a brokering role between private sector and civil society organisations, to screen private sector organisations to ensure that values align and to correct any potential power imbalances between the two parties. Civil society organisations can play a similar brokering role between private sector organisations and women's groups.

