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Pathways of Change through Women's Collective Action:

How Women are Overcoming Barriers and Bucking Trends
to Influence Rural Development In Indonesia

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Introduction

There is increasing focus in Indonesia and globally on reducing gender inequalities in a range of fields, including women's political representation in formal politics, participation in policy decision making, and in development decision making, with the goal of generating more gender equitable socio-economic and political development outcomes. Policy makers, practitioners, and researchers alike, have, for example, given much attention to the importance of introducing gender quotas in the nomination of candidates by political parties in elections, and understanding the implications of such quotas for women's political representation (see for example, Aspinall, White and Savirani, 2021; Bessel, 2010; Pratiwi, 2019; and Prihatini, 2019a and 2019b). It is also increasingly common to disaggregate socio-economic data and development policy and program impacts by gender so as to identify core gaps and challenges for gender inclusion and to monitor changes over time (see for example, Syukri et al. 2017, and Eddyono et al., 2016). However, prominent activists and scholars such as Batliwala (2019) and others (see for example, Agarwal [2001] and Kabeer [1999, 2012]) have identified that gender inequalities are often influenced by deeper social and political structures that shape power relations in ways which affect women's opportunities to exercise voice and to make choices so as to improve their wellbeing. Batliwala (2019), argues that such structures of social power vary significantly in different settings, sectors, and dimensions of social life across time, space and social fields, and that power dynamics need to be understood within these realms so as to ultimately influence *change*.² Agarwal (2001) too, in her important study of women's participation in different forms, but especially in relation to village-level decision making, emphasises the importance of women's participation in spaces that have the authority to affect such change.

One policy field in Indonesia that has had significant implications for the wellbeing of rural village women in Indonesia and provided the opportunity for women to participate in authoritative structures to influence village development is Indonesia's new Village Law, enacted in 2014. The country has embarked on an ambitious agenda to devolve a degree of authority for local development to the village level through the Village Law, with budgets directly channelled to nearly 75,000 villages across the archipelago to implement local-level initiatives. The new Law emphasises the importance of participatory community decision making, poverty reduction and, importantly for this study, gender equity. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of different village authorities in overseeing different aspects of village development. It also outlines the processes by which decisions are made on how to spend the Village Fund (Dana Desa) allocation through participatory village deliberation and consultation meetings (*musyawarah desa* – MusDes), especially the village development planning meeting—the Musrenbangdes. Indeed, the structures of governance introduced with the Village Law have the potential to enhance government responsiveness at the local level through

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² There is increasing attention to understanding not just the resources (financial or otherwise) needed for women to exercising such influence, but also the capacities of women and other marginalised groups to do so (Batliwala, 2019). We explore such capacities in the research sites in Setiawan et al. (2020).

active citizens and more participatory institutions (Antlöv et al. 2016). Article 4 in particular identifies the aims of recognising diversity, increasing village community participation in development, accelerating the attainment of welfare improvements and addressing disparities in national development.

Studies on the early implementation of the new Village Law have found that in some places there has been limited participation in village decision-making meetings, not all village meetings are inclusive, and that women are often less likely to attend village and hamlet-level meetings than men (Syukri et al., 2017; Dharmawan et al., 2018), which has thus limited women's influence on village development decision making. However, less attention has been given to understanding the underlying *processes* by which women have individually and collectively managed to buck this trend—and variation in these processes—by exercising influence in village development and other decision making and in their efforts to *change* power dynamics more broadly in different settings, social structures, and fields (cf. Batliwala, 2019).

This edited volume of case studies seeks to contribute to filling this gap by providing in-depth, within-case analysis of the processes by which women at the village level, bolstered by the support of civil society organisations (CSOs), have managed to influence the implementation of the Village Law in Indonesia (for comparative analysis see Diprose, Savirani, Setiawan and Francis [2020]). The cases explore examples of positive deviance, that being cases of how women have influenced village development under the Village Law through different forms of collective action, despite evidence of broader trends that suggests such influence is yet to have become the norm in the early implementation of the Law. Such analysis provides insights into how women specifically, and Village Law implementation more broadly, might be supported so that village development agendas are more gender inclusive.

The within-case analysis within this volume situates such processes of influence within the different geographic, sectoral, and socio-political contexts and explores these underlying dynamics. In covering a range of sectors, places and contexts throughout Indonesia, the cases explore how women's collective action in different forms—both at the grassroots level and in more structured advocacy—has facilitated *changes* in the ways power is exercised and decision making operates at the village level to be more inclusive of women—types of change that eventually impact the everyday lives of rural women in Indonesia. The 'changes' that we refer in this overview and which are detailed in the case studies cover three main aspects, although these overlap: individual behaviours, attitudes and capacities and social norms at the community level; institutional rules, priorities and practices (and by implication in the types of initiatives funded and implemented under the Village Law), and in the district and village environments (or what we label as contexts). We explain these further in the next section.

To illustrate these dynamics, the volume of case studies illustrates stories of women's changing influence in village development from 12 villages spread across 12 districts and nine provinces in Indonesia. The volume draws from a collaborative research by The University of Melbourne and Universitas Gadjah Mada in 2019, during which an all-female research team conducted village stays. During these stays, daily life and village meetings were observed (if held), social networks were identified and mapped, and in-depth and life history interviews were conducted with more than 600 people across the research sites across Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and East and West Nusa Tenggara (NTT and NTB) in Indonesia. Through village stays that allowed for a wide range of research methods to be used, researchers were able to capture the everyday lives and struggles of rural village women, and the many ways they sought to improve the wellbeing of themselves, their families and communities individually and collectively, as well as to capture a wide range of views from community members, but in particular those from more vulnerable groups. For ethical and confidentiality reasons, we use pseudonyms in all case studies when presenting research participant's views. The team also conducted wider research on socio-economic and political dynamics in district contexts and on the ways that civil society organisations concerned with gender inclusion and women's empowerment sought to support village women while also advocating for inclusive policy and program development in districts.

Fifteen CSOs and grassroots women's organisations supported the research, contributing to research planning, fieldwork facilitation, and iterative analysis. These organisations include the Institute for Women's Alternative Education (Institute KAPAL Perempuan), the Female-Headed Families Empowerment Foundation (PEKKA), 'Aisyiyah (the mass religious organisation for women associated with Muhammadiyah), the Forum for Service Providers (FPL), Migrant CARE, the Eastern Indonesia Knowledge Exchange Foundation (BaKTI), the Consortium of Women's Organisations in Sumatra (PERMAMPU), the Indonesian Foundation for Rural Capacity Building (BITRA), and the Annisa Swasti Foundation (Yasanti). It also includes the subnational partners of these organisations: the Community Empowerment and Assessment Foundation (YKPM, a partner of KAPAL Perempuan in the Pangkajene and Islands District, South Sulawesi), the Village Women's Care Foundation (YABIKU, a partner of FPL in East Nusa Tenggara), the DAMAR Women's Advocacy Institute (DAMAR, a partner of PERMAMPU in Lampung on Sumatra), the Independent Women's Union (SPI, a partner of FPL in Labuhan Batu, North Sumatra), the Panca Karsa Association (Perkumpulan Panca Karsa, a partner of Migrant CARE in Central Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara), and the Women's Groups and Sources of Life organisation (KPS2K, a partner of KAPAL Perempuan in East Java). These national and subnational organisations are also partners of the Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (MAMPU), which also supported this research, although the analysis and views presented are those of the authors.

This overview to the edited volume is structured to briefly explore the following key points that emerge in the case analysis of how women's collective action has created changes for both women's well-being and the implementation of the Village Law, as well as how such change has been supported by a wide range of CSOs across different contexts and sectors. First, we identify variation in the diversity of priorities and initiatives that villages have introduced as a result of women's influence on the implementation of the Law. Such initiatives go beyond infrastructure and economic development projects (although women have also prioritised these kinds of initiatives) and traverse multiple sectoral issues in seeking to address challenges for villagers, particularly women, through village development. Second, we identify the different types of changes that are evident in the case studies that have implications for women's everyday wellbeing, as well as their influence on structures of power, decision making and village development at the individual and institutional levels, and in broader contexts.

Third, we discuss how changes have come about for rural village women and what factors have contributed to the changes that are illustrated through the case studies. This includes a discussion of how context dynamics constrain or enable women's influence, variation in core challenges (or sectoral issues) for women, and how collective action has contributed to forging these changes as is illustrated by the case studies. Fourth, we explore the temporal dimensions of change. And finally, we explore some of the pathways by which such changes have occurred in the research areas, that being different contexts. For a more detailed, in-depth comparative analysis of these and many other aspects, including analysis of gender inclusion in policy and practice in additional research areas where no CSOs were active at the time of the research, and analysis of other quantitative datasets and of CSO strategies of village support and wider advocacy, see Diprose, Savirani, Setiawan and Francis (2020).

In addition to exploring grassroots women's collective action in rural Indonesia and how this influences the implementation of the Village Law, the case studies also illustrate the ways that CSOs have used various strategies to support village women as well as their own collective action through political and policy advocacy. While this latter aspect is not discussed in detail in this overview, it needs to be emphasised at the outset that the wide range of different CSOs captured across the case studies have one thing in common among the many ways that they collaborate with and support village women: they work with and through village groups, in particular women's groups. As Partners of MAMPU, they also received funding for these activities, among others. While the within-case findings presented in this volume, and other comparative analysis presented elsewhere capture the role for CSOs in supporting village women, the findings nonetheless

remain helpful for a range of audiences for understanding: *how* grassroots women's collective action might be supported by group structures of different kinds that involve women, and *how*, or via what mechanisms, external actors (not just CSOs) might help bolster women's influence in villages and beyond. That is, even if not collaborating with CSOs as partners in initiatives to bolster gender-inclusion and women's influence in governance and other power structures, some of the features of the *ways* CSOs have supported women to facilitate their agency certainly constitute important learning for other settings, actors and agencies concerned with gender-inclusive governance, structures of power, and socio-economic development. We now discuss each of the four dimensions of change mentioned above.

1. Greater Diversity of Village Priorities for Village Fund Support under the Village Law

The Village Law was designed to create the structures of authority for villages to, through community decision-making processes, decide and deliver village development priorities throughout the archipelago, and to provide a designated budget allocation for villages to meet these self-determined needs. Villagers decide how to spend the allocated Village Fund through MusDes (Chapter IX, Paragraph 1, Article 80). This shift, however, was not entirely new. The introduction of the Law was preceded by large-scale development programs such as the Kecamatan [Subdistrict] Development Program (KDP), and later the National Community Empowerment Program (PNPM Mandiri) that had introduced community-driven development methodologies and which had a strong focus on funding small-scale village infrastructure projects amongst other poverty alleviation initiatives. The introduction of the Law cemented some of the aspects of these programs in Law for all rural villages, clarifying the relevant aspects of village authority and budget allocations for community driven development.

When the Law was enacted in 2014, a new Ministry of Villages, Disadvantaged Regions Development, and Transmigration (Kemendes, herein the Ministry of Villages) was established to oversee the policy change and institutional changes introduced by the 2014 Law, together with the Ministry of Home Affairs that has long had authority for decentralisation. These Ministries, particularly the Ministry of Villages, have provided central guidance on what to prioritise in village development—providing such guidance was deemed particularly important in early phases of the rapid roll-out of the new Law when villages were becoming accustomed to their increased authority and new budgets. Early guidance on Village Fund priorities was strongly focused on village infrastructure (e.g. small roads, markets, small bridges) and water reservoirs, as well as economic development, such as developing village-owned enterprises (BUMDes), and village flagship products. While this was extended in later years³, in practice, based on both central guidance on priorities and the influence of community development programs that preceded the Law, most often villages have continued to focus priorities on infrastructure and economic development (see also Dharmawan et al., 2018; Syukri et al., 2017).

Yet, as we see in the case studies in this volume, the range of initiatives funded is more diverse in the research areas where women have had at least some influence on village development priority setting. That is not to say that infrastructure and economic development have not also been prioritised in the research villages—indeed, as we see in Diprose, Savirani, Setiawan and Francis (2020), and in the case studies in this volume, women have also prioritised developing infrastructure, for example facilities for Early Childhood Education and Integrated Health Posts, and have sought to develop village enterprises that support livelihoods, both for women and for the broader community. In the North Hulu Sungai research village, for example, women have spurred the development of new village-owned enterprises to diversify livelihood options (Cahyati and Cahyaningrum, 2020). However, in the case studies we see significant diversity in the initiatives that have been supported by villagers and draw from the Village Fund, based on women's influence.

³ By 2018, village sports facilities, early childhood education facilities (PAUD), and maternal health facilities (e.g. polindes and posyandu), and responding to/preparedness for disasters were also included in central guidance on priorities.

This has ranged from nutrition gardens, reproductive health services, and support for different trainings and skills development in the Cirebon research village (Rahmawati and Ulfa, 2020), to village ambulances and safe houses for protection from domestic violence in the East Lombok research village (Capri and Sawiji, 2020) and village support for women's care posts in the Labuhan Batu research village (Astrina and Tanaya, 2020). Women have advocated for access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and solar-powered electricity in village development in the small islands in the Pangkajene and Islands District (Pangkep), as well as for the broader recognition of fisherwomen so they can access government-funded fishing equipment (Jamson and Sawiji, 2020). Other initiatives also include support for citizen documentation and the certification of religious marriages so that they are also recognised by the state in Bangkalan (Wardhani and Cahyaningrum, 2020), recognition and support for informal sector workers such as homeworkers in both Bantul (Rahayu and Ulfa, 2020) and Deli Serdang (Cahyati and Tanvil, 2020), and paralegal services for women who have experienced domestic violence in North Central Timor research village (Bayo and Tanaya, 2020). In Gresik in East Java and in Pangkep in South Sulawesi, the Village Fund has been allocated to support a range of initiatives introduced by 'Women's School' groups in the villages (Prabaningrum and Abheseka, 2020; Jamson and Sawiji, 2020).

As a result of village women's collective influence, these and many other initiatives have all have been supported by villages, often with an allocation from the Village Fund for projects. For example, in the Tanggamus reseach village, a cross-group collective movement concerned with sexual and reproductive health rights established a service post that serves as a safe space for women to report domestic violence cases and to access services. This was formalised through a Village Head Decision Letter, paving the way for an allocation of Village Fund to sustain the post's activities (Astrina and Ulfa, 2020). In Central Lombok, the Village Fund has been used to support the establishment of one-stop service provision centres that help migrant workers to access and follow legal administrative processes to work overseas, monitor their welfare while overseas, and provide training and support for returned migrants (and their families) to both utilise remittances for sustained livelihoods and to integrate back into communities (Rahayu and Abheseka, 2020).

The diversity of initiatives that village women have introduced or expanded under the Village Law captured in the study, in part, but do not wholly reflect the sectoral focus of those CSOs that have supported these women. With the support of MAMPU, the CSOs involved in this study have focused on five key issues that have been of particular concern for women—social protection, reproductive health and nutrition, protection for migrant workers, better work conditions and reduced discrimination against women in the informal sector (in particular for homeworkers) and reducing violence against women, in particular domestic violence. That is not to say these CSOs necessarily 'introduced' these issues to village women, as in most cases, women in the research villages were encountering significant challenges in relation to these issues before CSOs provided (further) support to these village women. Indeed, at the onset many of these CSOs worked closely with village women and other actors to identify core challenges women encountered in specific localities, both more widely but also those problems encountered by the most vulnerable women. As we can see from the examples above and in the case studies, these themes also emerge in the kinds of initiatives for which village women have advocated for village support, given the opportunities provided by the Village Law.

Advocating for village support for social protection initiatives is a key theme evident in four of the research areas where organisations such as PEKKA and KAPAL Perempuan and its subnational partners KPS2K and YKPM have focused support for village women: in the Bangkalan and Gresik research villages in East Java Province, in the Pangkep research village in South Sulawesi Province, and in the North Hulu Sungai research village in South Kalimantan Province. Central Lombok District in West Nusa Tenggara Province is a key region for sending migrant workers overseas, both men and women, to countries such as Malaysia and to countries in the Middle East. It is unsurprising then that village-level and district-level assistance for migrant workers and their families has been a key focus of advocacy and collective action of villagers in this region, with the support of Migrant CARE.

Two areas that have large numbers of women homeworkers—Deli Serdang in North Sumatra Province, and Bantul in Yogyakarta Special Province—have been, respectively, the focus of BITRA and Yasanti’s support for village women in improving working conditions for homeworkers. Cirebon District in West Java and Tanggamus District in Lampung are areas where organisations such as ‘Aisyiyah and DAMAR/PERMAMPU have collaborated with village women to improve health and nutrition. In the case of Lampung this also involved responding to and providing protection for women and children who have experienced domestic violence, as well as efforts to reduce the incidence of domestic violence. Meanwhile, FPL and its subnational partners—SPI in Labuhan Batu, North Sumatra Province and YABIKU in North Central Timor, NTT Province—and BaKTI in East Lombok Province have provided a range of support for village women, but most especially in responding to, seeking to reduce, and providing protection for women and children who have experienced domestic violence.

However, as we see in the case studies, especially over time, the village development priorities and demands from women have gone beyond these sectoral issues. The case studies illustrate that as women have become more accustomed to exercising their voice, participating in village decision-making processes (whether invited or not) and lobbying for their priorities to be accommodated in village development, the types of village development outcomes under the Village Law have diversified. They have covered village economic *and* social policies and projects, as well support for training, skills development and information dissemination, service delivery and a range of other initiatives. Women have proposed new forums, task forces, and initiatives to tackle particular issues, bringing in other stakeholders to these forums, as has been the case in the Labuhan Batu village (see Astrina and Tanaya, 2020). In the Pangkep research village, village women in the ‘Women’s School’ group initially advocated for (and received) a small amount of funds from the Village Fund to support their activities and livelihoods development. After a new Village Head was elected who was resistant to wide community participation in MusDes decision making, particularly that of the ‘Women’s School’, such support for the School halted. However, women from the School used all manner of strategies to build their networks, garner support and successfully push for a wide range of projects as mentioned above, not just for the benefit of women (such as support for fisherwomen to access government-funded fishing equipment) but also the wider community—access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and solar-powered electricity (Jamson and Sawiji, 2020).

2. Identifying Different Types of Changes Experienced by Women and Communities

The cases presented in this compendium illustrate the different types of changes that women have directly experienced in relation to their everyday wellbeing, but also have implications for women’s changing influence at different levels—institutionally and in broader social and political contexts. Underlying such changes has been women’s growing gender awareness, knowledge, capacities, and networks that have resulted in their collective action, along with the variety of forms of support from and collaboration with CSOs (see Diprose, Savirani, Setiawan and Francis, 2020; and Setiawan et al., 2020).

Individual changes

At the individual level, the case studies illustrate changes over time in the individual behaviours, attitudes and perceptions of gender roles and gender equity, particularly in relation to women’s right to participate in and exercise voice in public forums and spaces, and in ways that women’s voice and influence is exercised. These changes in attitudes, behaviours and perceptions were evident among women themselves and among other community members to varying degrees. The cases illustrate that changes in women’s wellbeing, perceptions of their rights, and capacities to exercise voice, often emerged from their participation in groups of the kind that provide a safe space for women to grow their skills, knowledge, networks, confidence, and capacities. These groups have also provided sources of mutual support for members to exercise voice and overcome many of social and political barriers to women’s influence in public life—processes that are key in solidifying women’s collective action. Women from different regions explained their initial fear, and how they grew their confidence and capacities through group activities, to then increasingly participate in village decision-making

forums. For example, Hatini, a Balai Sakinah 'Aisyiyah (BSA, 'Aisyiyah women's group) member in the Cirebon research village described how she and many other women felt nervous about participating in a Musrenbang for the first time:

"I was scared, in my mind I kept wondering if [putting forward the] proposal was the wrong path [to take]. My fear was that it shouldn't be me, I shouldn't be making a proposal here...[The proposal put forward was accepted]...It doesn't matter if it was successful or not. The important thing is that we proposed it." (Hatini, Cirebon research village, 2 March 2019)

Hatini's daughter described how her mother's confidence has grown through participation in the BSA and since was chosen as the head of the Nutrition Garden, which also receives support from the village:

"I have seen really positive [impacts] for my mum. Now she is not scared when she is trading [in the market]. Whatever she does she pushes forward herself. For the Nutrition Garden she has been supported by her family and 'Aisyiyah. Before she wasn't very brave in public. Now, thanks be to God, she is confident to be social in groups and in organisations." (Hatini's daughter, Cirebon research village, 3 March 2013)

For Laila, who was eventually selected by fellow group members as the leader of the 'Women's School' group in Pangkep, participating in and leading this group was a profound change:

"[Previously] I was scared to talk to the Village Head, even to the Hamlet Head. [I thought] if I spoke, I would be blamed and make them angry. That was my fear. I was scared. Before [joining] the Women's School group, I wasn't confident. If I went out of my house and saw someone wearing an official uniform walking on the pier, I hid. I was scared, scared to say something, scared to be wrong. After one year of participating in the Women's School, my courage emerged. I realised that I have a place here, I have rights here. I already knew that I had rights here, but I didn't fully comprehend who should fulfil my rights, who would we talk to about our rights?... Before, I didn't have the courage at all to speak in front of men, I wasn't confident, I didn't have the courage. But since I became a member of the Women's School, thank God, we have made ourselves confident to convey what we think." (Laila, Pangkep research 'intervention' village, 25 February 2019)

Mila, in Deli Serdang in Sumatra explains how courage and confidence for village women grew with time.

"We participated in a lot of types of training sessions, which made us more courageous to come forward [and speak]. Before these training sessions, when we introduced ourselves by name in a group, lots of people even said their name wrong. Now it's not like that, it feels normal looking at people's faces." (Mila, Head of the Straw Group, Deli Serdang research village, 9 November 2019)

In many village stories of change for women described throughout the case studies, we can see how individual-level changes emerged through participation in new village women's groups. For example, in the Gresik and Pangkep research villages, KPS2K and YKPM (partners of KAPAL Perempuan), respectively, helped village women to establish Women's School groups, to increase women's economic and political capacity to exercise voice and to respond to severe economic challenges (Prabaningrum and Abheseka, 2020; Jamson and Sawiji, 2020). Through these Schools, village women built their critical awareness of gender roles and gender equity (through critical education programs, delivered with the support of these partner CSOs), and women's rights to social protection, as well as also strengthening their leadership and public speaking skills so as to have more confidence and capacity to speak up in public spaces. With these strengthened skills, networks, capacities and group support, village women in the Gresik research village were then better able to participate in village development planning meetings (Musrenbang), which resulted in Village Fund allocations for the Women's School for its activities, and the institutionalisation of the School through Village Regulations. Similarly in Pangkep, members of Women's School succeeded in advocating for their needs in MusDes and Musrenbangdes, resulting in allocations of Village Fund for the School's activities.

Community and institutional-level changes

Such individual changes were interrelated with and contributed to the broader community and institutional-level changes that are also illustrated by the case studies. For example, the case study in Tanggamus shows

that individual changes are not only grounded upon critical education for women, but also education for other members of society, such as village men, youth, and public figures in the village (Astrina and Ulfa, 2020). DAMAR conducted gender mainstreaming classes for village women on a variety of topics, such as gender equity, social and feminist analysis, sexual and reproductive health issues, and how these issues relate to gender-based violence. Similar trainings were provided for village officials, public and religious figures, youth groups, and other members of community groups in the village. These classes not only helped to facilitate villagers' increased understanding of sexual and reproductive health issues, but these classes also initiated a cross-group collective movement to handle cases of violence against women and children, formalised through the formation of a taskforce.

The community-level change evident in the case studies refers to shifts in restrictive social norms that have limited women's rights, voice and mobility, with such social norms often considered to be an informal institution. The gender mainstreaming classes in Tanggamus helped to broaden collective understanding of gender roles, sexual and reproductive health rights, and understanding of what constitutes forms of domestic violence—in the Tanggamus research village, collective understandings of domestic violence have increasingly broadened to incorporate psychological violence and abuse and the economic control of women. Similarly, in East Lombok, the formation of a new, 'Constituent Group' (a mixed-gender group established to advocate for women's rights and core concerns) has not only helped grow women's individual skills and networks, but also wider community understandings of the rights of women and children, and perceptions of domestic violence (Capri and Sawiji, 2020). The Constituent Group helped to increase women's bargaining position in households and in the community, and increased the prioritisation of policies for responding to domestic violence and improving prevention in the village.

At the institutional level, we refer to changes in the rules, that being village regulations (*Peraturan Desa/Perdes*) and other institutional practices that shape gender inclusion in decision-making in some cases, and village policies and priorities for Village Fund allocations in others—often both. These institutional changes are both the result of women's collective action but also have implications for, ideally, creating longer-term opportunities for continued women's influence on village development, particularly when CSOs are no longer present in villages. For example, Migrant CARE and its local partners the Panca Karsa Association (PPK) collaborated with villagers and the village government to form a village-based service provision model for migrant workers, the DESBUMI—Villages that Care for Migrant Workers—and established a new women's group of former migrant workers called La Tansa in Central Lombok research village (Rahayu and Abheseka, 2020). As well as providing information for migrant workers, the La Tansa women's group with the support of PPK, advocated for new village policies, and provided input into draft regulations, which ultimately resulted in the enactment of Village Regulation No. 4, 2015 on the Protection of Overseas Indonesian Migrant Workers from Villages in Central Lombok. This Village Regulation has provided a policy framework and funding allocation, which has helped improve safe and legal migration practices in the village, monitoring of migrant workers from the village, and handling of any emerging issues for migrant workers. The regulation also acknowledges DESBUMI and La Tansa as partners of the village government, which has then allowed the groups to secure allocations of the Village Fund for their activities. Institutional change also occurred at the Central Lombok at the district level with the enactment of District Regulation No. 4, 2017 on the Protection for Migrant Workers, which mandates the establishment of an integrated service centre for the legal processing of documents for overseas work.

Similarly, in the case studies that explore the experiences of informal sector workers presented in this volume in Bantul District and Deli Serdang District, the formal recognition of homeworkers unions by the Department of Manpower and Transmigration in each district provided institutional support for homeworkers unions to access various district government grants and empowerment programs (Rahayu and Ulfa, 2020; Cahyati and Tanvil, 2020). In the Bantul research village, this recognition also contributed to the Union's successful

advocacy for a Village Fund Allocation for different types of activities, guaranteed through the enactment of a Village Regulation. Indeed, in many of the research villages, new Village Regulations were introduced to specifically enact policies on issues identified as important by women. While the Homeworkers Union in Bantul was also influential in the formation of Provincial Decision No. 463/03508, 2017, on the Protection and Prosperity of Female Homeworkers, similar advocacy in Deli Serdang for the ratification of the draft Regional Regulation on the Protection of Homeworkers has remained difficult as, some regional parliamentarians argue, there is no national legal basis for homeworker protection.

Context changes

Finally, the case studies illustrate changes over time in the broader district and village environments or contexts that have become enabling factors for women to continue to exercise voice and influence in advocating for their rights to shape policies and programs and access services that benefit them. These changes are quite broad and more long term in orientation. The case studies illustrate that such changes have come about through combinations of factors (described further below) to, over time, shift attitudes, behaviours, institutional rules, policies and priority setting processes to be more gender inclusive. This includes both changes in more formal, institutionalised practices so as to give greater space and be more conducive to women exercising voice and influence, and broader changes in more informal, local gender norms on women's roles and rights, both in relation to participating in public spaces and village-development decision making. Given that in many places the constraints on such changes are in abundance, particularly for institutional change, shifting contexts to be more conducive to gender inclusion have required time, village women's own collective action, and in many cases specific advocacy strategies from CSOs alongside their carefully sequenced support for village women. We illustrate such changes with examples in later discussion.

3. Factors Contributing to Changes in Rural Village Women's Lives

Analysis in case studies in this volume show that there is a high degree of variability of how change occurs at the village level, both among women and in terms of gender norms and gender inclusiveness in village-level decision making, and what constrains or creates the opportunities for change. Across the case studies, we see many factors that contribute to this variability. We discuss three main factors in this overview—context factors (that being the features of the enabling environment at the village and district levels), the core issues and challenges that women and CSOs supporting them are seeking to tackle, and the nature as well as types of collective action undertaken to advocate for change (for further detailed comparative analysis see Diprose, Savirani, Setiawan and Francis, 2020).

Enabling environments: District and village contexts

Indonesia is a vast archipelago that displays significant diversity in terms of social structures and norms, economic development, levels of poverty, infrastructure and other resource endowments, geography and population density, groups, organisations and institutions, and in terms of its political structures and leadership. The 12 case studies in this volume drawn from the nine research provinces illustrate this diversity. As we can see in the case studies, context dynamics shape constraints and opportunities for women's collective action and influence to create change in private and public realms. As Diprose, Savirani, Setiawan and Francis (2020) show, district and village contexts also interact to create constraints and opportunities in the enabling environment for women to exercise voice and influence.

While the many different features of contexts can constrain or enable gender inclusion and women's influence and collective action in public realms (and in some cases both), at the onset, socio-cultural norms, the diversity of group and their membership and representation in decision making, as well as political leadership and related organisational/institutional policies and practice are especially important for shaping options, strategies and pathways for collective action and ultimately the changes experienced by women. For instance, there are villages (and districts) with a leadership that support women's rights to exercise agency—both

individually and collectively. Village Heads, other village government officials, members of the Village Consultative Council (BPD) and other authoritative state actors may have already encouraged diversity and gender inclusion decision-making forums, policies, regulations and priorities or at least be open to doing so. Social leaders—religious, customary, ethnic, associational and others—may have also led the way on discouraging gender norms that create disadvantages for women, recognising women’s rights and diversity, or pressuring other authoritative actors that control budgets and policies to be more gender inclusive.

But there are also villages and districts with weak or even an absence of such leadership—in such environments, the constraints for women are deeper and there is even resistance to women exercising voice and influence in public realms, which shapes the nature and form of collective action necessary to influence change. In principle, however, strong women’s collective action at the village level facilitates women to expand their influence over time, both in villages and beyond. In this volume we see many instances of such influence extending beyond the village. This is evident, for example, in the case studies exploring change in the Pangkep (Jamson and Sawiji, 2020), Gresik (Prabaningrum and Abheseka, 2020), Tanggamus (Astrina and Ulfa, 2020), and Labuhan Batu research villages (Astrina and Tanaya, 2020), among others. In some cases, such influence has occurred at district levels (particularly in policy and the scale out of initiatives), and in others this is occurring between villages in the ways they share ideas, draw from learning in other villages, and support each other.

Elections, both at the village and district levels, are critical political events that can create or constrain the opportunities for change. Village elections can be an enabling factor for gender inclusion and women’s increased voice and influence if a new leadership is elected that can facilitate and be open-minded to initiatives introduced by citizens, and as is relevant for this study, those introduced by women. However, changes in leadership can also be a constraining factor if leaders are close-minded to gender inclusiveness and women’s voices for various reasons. Village leaders have a critical role in facilitating change, particularly when women’s collective action aims to institutionalize gender inclusiveness in village development. Change is possible when leaders are resistant to gender inclusion, as we see in the further discussion of collective action below, but it is far more difficult.

Such institutionalisation often occurs through involving women in village decision-making processes, priority setting in allocation of the Village Fund, and policy formulation that is usually enacted through Village Regulations or other village government instructions. If the Village Head and other leaders change or no longer support gender inclusiveness, then women might be excluded from meetings, resources might no longer be allocated, and in the extreme case a Village Regulation might be withdrawn (although this is hard to do) or simply ignored. In such cases, essentially the structures of power in village governance are closed off to women. When this happens women’s influence is weakened, and intensive, creative efforts are needed to navigate these constraints so as to continue to collectively influence power structures. In the case studies from Cirebon District (Rahmawati and Ulfa, 2020) and Tanggamus District (Astrina and Ulfa, 2020), we see how the village leadership has been very supportive of women’s collective action and influence and ultimately supported more gender inclusive village decision-making processes and institutional practices. However, in the Pangkep case study village we see how the changes in village leadership has constrained women’s growing collective influence and had implications for the forms of collective action and strategies used to influence decision making (Jamson and Sawiji, 2020).

While for many district-level dynamics might feel far away from village life, both physically or emotionally, the district leadership and policies can also have institutional implications for village governments and village dynamics. Indirectly, district governments have some authority to influence the village by regulating and monitoring Village Fund spending to make sure it operates based on rules set up by the Ministries of Home Affairs and Finance. A percentage of the Village Fund is also sourced from district government budgets and sometimes districts also provide additional budget allocations. Districts can also create policies and programs

that are implemented in villages and there are political connections between district and village actors. The district government thus can also play a critical role for facilitating women's influence, implementing initiatives that are the result of women's collective action, and also support the exposure of key issues to the public that are important to women, so women's voices and priorities gain wider recognition. They can also use such influence on the village to pressure leaders resistant to gender inclusion.

We see in the case studies that district leaders have supported women in their collective action in, for example, advocating for the protection of migrant workers in Central Lombok and in creating new policies and services (Rahayu and Abheseka, 2020). In Gresik, district leaders supported women's collective action and pressured resistant village leaders to support Women's Schools, also providing additional funding to scale out the initiative in villages across the district (Prabaningrum and Abheseka, 2020). Members from the School also participated in district development planning forums, raising awareness of other issues important to women such as eliminating child marriage, as one School member explains:

"We made recommendations in the subdistrict and district Musrenbang. KPS2K has always advocated for eliminating child marriage. We approached district government offices and we alerted them to the consequences of child marriage for women's economic wellbeing, domestic violence, maternal mortality, and children's health. As a result, in 2018, [the district government] published a Circular on the Elimination of Child Marriage." (Women's School group member, Gresik research 'intervention' village, 19 February 2019).

In Cirebon, district leaders have been a part of the network of actors that, together with village women and 'Aisiyiah, have advocated for greater recognition of key concerns for women—the district helped facilitate connection between women in the research village and national leaders. As a consequence an 'Aisiyiah cadre from the research village were invited to Presidential Palace on International Women's Day in 2019 (Rahmawati and Ulfa, 2020). Influential district leaders have also given greater public exposure to women's livelihoods needs, promoting and supporting fisherwomen from the Pangkep research village, and inviting one of the Women's School leaders to participate in the district parliament elections. This has had benefits for district leaders too— in Pangkep, such actions have created the strong image that the Pangkep District Head is a visionary leader (Jamson and Sawiji, 2020). Cahaya, the group leader for the Women's School in the village conveyed her feelings when nominated as a district representative:

"I have mixed feelings, and keep asking myself whether I can do it, and why me. But I also feel proud that I can represent women to express our voices. I never imagined that we [women] would have a political contract with the government, [or] could participate in elections. I never imagined all of these things. We are from a marginalised group, but we still can exercise our voices." (Cahaya, Women's School leader, Pangkep, 2 March 2019).

The case studies illustrate that context dynamics shape constraints and opportunities for women's collective action and influence to create change in private and public realms. While we return to this theme later in this overview, it is important to note here that in the comparative analysis of the case studies, Diprose, Savirani, Setiawan and Francis (2020) identify different types of contexts (combining district and village factors) that are more or less conducive to women's influence. These types are based on the features (or indicators of gender inclusiveness) of contexts, such as the existing degree of inclusive decision-making, the nature and types of policies and regulations and how these give attention to women's self-identified priorities, political will to support gender inclusion and women's empowerment, and the degree to which socio-cultural norms restrict women's role in public life, their rights or opportunities to exercise voice, among many others. This has implications for if and how women can influence village governance, so as to contribute to their efforts to improve their wellbeing.

Four broad categories of contexts are identified in their analysis, which are more or less conducive to women's influence. These categories reflect interactions between district and village dynamics as well as indicators of

'difficulty' for introducing or strengthening gender inclusion. They range from *highly difficult contexts*, in which there are many constraints to gender inclusion at village *and* district levels, to *highly conducive contexts* in which there is far more support for gender inclusion and women's empowerment at village and district levels. *Moderately difficult* and *moderately conducive contexts* sit somewhere in between, depending on if there are indicators of some efforts already present at gender inclusion in decision making, policies and programs (or the political will/ openness to improve), and less restrictive gender norms, at either village or district levels.

As we can see in Figure 1, at the onset in the research sites (that is, prior to village women undertaking more extensive collective action, often following programs introduced by CSOs to support these women), few research regions had indicators of being highly conducive to gender inclusion or women's empowerment when taking both village and district dynamics into account. Around of a third of the research sites displayed the features of being highly difficult environments for women to exercise voice and influence through collective action, while the rest were deemed moderately difficult or moderately conducive given there were indicators of some support for gender inclusion and women to exercise agency at either village or district levels to varying degrees. However, in later sections below we map how the environments changed in many sites over time.

Types of keys issues and challenges for women: Sectoral focus

As mentioned above, there are a diverse range of issues that present key challenges for women and these vary across the archipelago. The CSOs captured in-depth in this study, but also those more widely that received MAMPU funding, focused their support for village women in their collective action and in their broader advocacy work in regions in which, among others, key challenges were evident for village women in at least one of the five core sectoral or cross-cutting issues mentioned above. Overall, the case studies show that village women, often with the support of CSOs, have sought to tackle these issues and have successfully brought about at least some changes in relation to all these issues under the Village Law. We argue that differences in the core concerns of women (or what might be considered a sectoral focus), contribute to how and at what speed change might be effected, the types of women's collective action involved, and the approaches of CSOs in supporting village women.

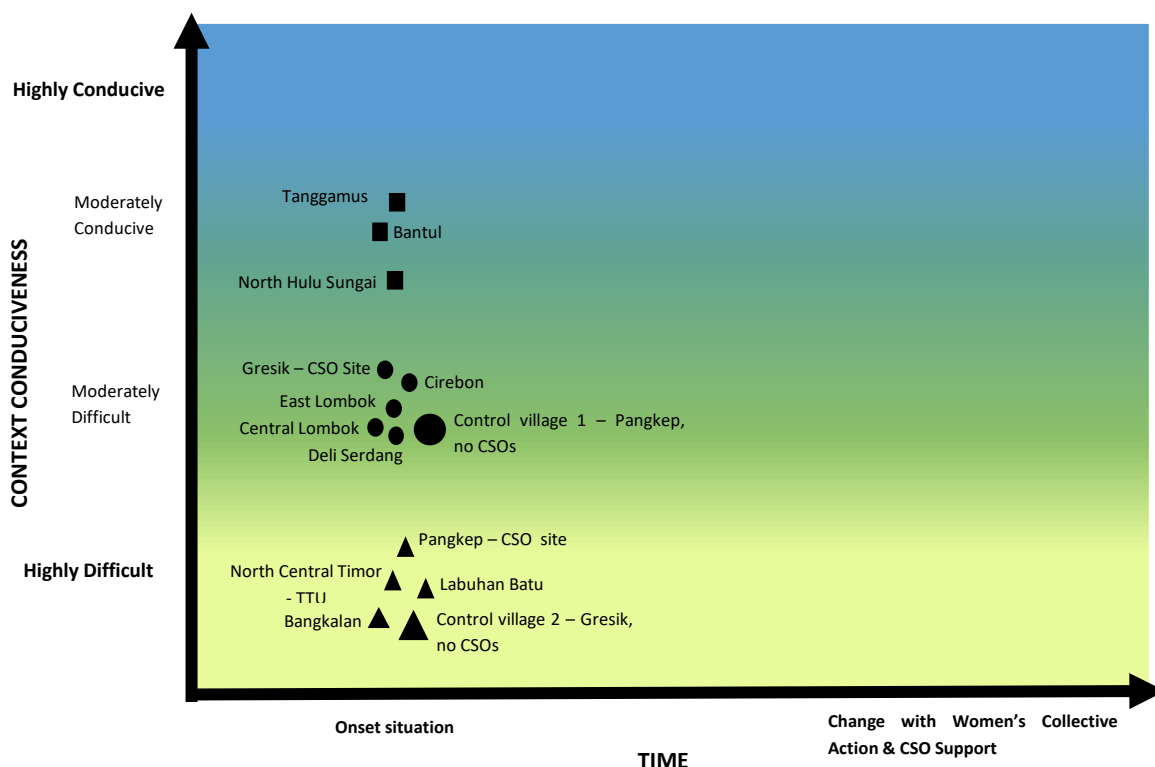


Figure 1: Onset conditions for improving women's influence in structures of power and decision making

We suggest that the most challenging issues to tackle are those that run up against particularly patriarchal socio-cultural norms and deeply entrenched attitudes on gender roles and women's rights to exercise voice in both private and public realms of women's lives. This is not least the case when it comes to finding ways to both respond to and support women in cases of domestic violence, and to find ways to reduce the frequency of cases within the broader goal of preventing such gender-based violence. Tackling domestic and other forms of gender-based violence through collective action directly confronts some of the patriarchal structures in Indonesia that are rooted and embedded in everyday life to varying degrees in different places (see for example Bennett, Andajani-Sutjahjo, and Idrus, 2011; Aisyah and Parker, 2014; Abdul Syukur and Bagshaw, 2020). While other issues are also challenging to tackle and some of these also challenge social norms (reproductive rights, for example, can be contentious in some places), the changes advocated by village women tended to be less controversial when they related to social policies such as providing basic services such as healthcare, and economic policies such as supporting livelihoods. These kinds of issues were more in line with existing rules, regulations and priorities, or services that might even have been relatively available (but not accessed by all), but a stronger push was needed at the village level to make opportunities and services more accessible for all and particularly for the most vulnerable.

However, undertaking initiatives through collective action was slower, took longer, and change was more incremental when it came to tackling challenges for women that related to intimate partner relations, or influencing the most sensitive socio-cultural norms around women's roles and rights, both of which were often issues around which there were cultural taboos for public discussion on the issue. Husnul, from East Lombok explains how difficult it is for women to speak out in relation to these issues:

"No one tells anyone else. If we tell people about [the violence we experience] and then we get divorced, people will feel bad for the husbands. No one talks about it with anyone else." (Husnul, Constituent Group member and Posyandu cadre, East Lombok research village, 15 July 2019)

Diprose, Savirani, Setiawan and Francis (2020) find that in highly difficult, more restrictive contexts in which women which are often confined to household roles and in which patriarchal norms were stronger, it was more difficult to break through the barriers to influence such gender norms and for women to exercise voice and influence in public forums and decision-making processes.

Change did happen, but it lagged behind the speed at which other changes occurred on other issues and in other places (see for example the diagrams below in Figure 1 and 2, and the case studies across the archipelago on tackling domestic violence from Labuhan Batu in Sumatra, to North Central Timor in NTT). In most cases, village women with the support of CSOs did not focus on tackling these norms in isolation, but instead sought to slowly change perceptions through broader initiatives focused on a range of issues, from service access to livelihoods.

The opposite was also the case: the more an issue gained public attention and political support (such as migrant worker protection, maternal health, or education) the more the opportunities were available for women to exercise influence through collective action, and there were fewer barriers to change. For example, there were more enabling factors in gaining support for bolstering social protection, as this has been an issue of focus for the Indonesian government more broadly over the past two decades given focus its and budget support for healthcare facilities.

Women's collective action driving change in villages

Across the case studies of stories of change we see examples of women growing their agency, voice and involvement in collective action in many of the research villages, as is also mentioned above. We also see different forms of collective action undertaken by village women that contributed, first, to making positive

changes in women's lives, and second, to influence broader structures of power and decision making. In the processes that play out over time, we find these forms of collective action—both formal and informal, with group participation sitting at the intersection of the two—are often interrelated, overlapping or intersecting, and mutually strengthening in the research villages, particularly when it comes to women's influence on structures of power and decision making in both governance and socio-political spheres, and specifically in relation to village development and governance under the implementation of the Village Law.

However, first it is important to highlight that we have also distinguished between who undertakes collective action in this study. Grassroots village women's collective action in rural Indonesia—the actions taken by village women to improve their wellbeing, both together with and distinct from that of CSOs and other actors—is one dimension of women's collective action in which village women seek to exercise power, voice and to influence decisions which affect them. Support for these village women from CSOs, as well as CSOs own advocacy on gender inclusion and women's empowerment and their efforts to influence structures of power and decision-making is another dimension of women's collective action, which also has implications for village dynamics but is broader. In the research and in the case studies in this volume, we explore both dimensions of collective action, and the ways that this has influenced village and district environments, and ultimately Village Law implementation. Thus, below we first discuss the main forms of women's grass-roots collective action identified in the research sites and then we briefly discuss the support for village women's groups from CSOs and their wider advocacy strategies that are evident throughout the case studies, with the latter being outlined in far more detail in Diprose, Savirani, Setiawan and Francis (2020).

Second, collective action can also take different forms. As is outlined in Diprose, Savirani, Setiawan and Francis (2020), formal collective action generally takes place through an organisation or government structure (Evans and Nambiar, 2013). These organisations might include microfinance groups, associations to manage natural resources (such as water) or cooperatives (Pandolfelli et al., 2008). They might also take place through participating directly in government structures and forums. Informal collective action tends to take place within more 'amorphous social networks' where there is greater flexibility for members to participate according to their changing needs (Pandolfelli et al., 2008, 3). While the differences between formal and informal collective action can be fuzzy and often overlap, in this research we have delineated formal collective action to be those kinds of actions that seek to influence government authority and related structures of decision making that affect policy, resource allocation decisions, program design and delivery, and other similar kinds of authoritative structures. We separate out women's participation *per se* in groups and associations—which can influence women's wellbeing but does not always seek to influence broader government policies and socio-political structures of authority—as a form of collective action sitting at the intersection of formal and informal collective action. We then explore the more informal, amorphous forms of collective action through more fluid networks and indirect pathways of influence.

Forms of collective action

Formal collective action

In Indonesia, and in the case studies, we see groups and associations seeking to influence socio-political and governance structures through a range of actions directly and indirectly, which includes the participation of individuals and these groups in government decision-making forums at village and district levels—for example in MusDes (village consultation and deliberation meetings for decision making) and/or Musrenbangdes (village development planning consultation and deliberation meetings)—and in taskforces to shape and deliver programs and other initiatives. We also see such action through group participation in other social influencing structures that shape norms or allocate resources both within and outside the key functionings of the state. Women also ran, in a few instances, for office (participating in elections – such as in the Pangkep case), and in a few instances via strategically using their collective vote in elections to support a specific candidate known to include women in decision-making forums. As we see in all the case studies, to varying degrees, women also

influenced the formulation and content of village regulations, and in some cases contributed to the content of district regulations.

Formal forms of collective action constitute a form of exercising **power to** shape political and policy decisions that affect women's wellbeing, as well as a way of shifting social norms that may constrain their choices and participation in public realms. In finding common ground among people with different interests and building collective strength through participation in the groups and forums discussed above, women have found **power with** the other group members in the mutual support they provide to each other, and with other actors, groups and associations in shaping the decisions of authoritative structures so as to be more gender inclusive.⁴

Participation in organised women's groups—bolstering agency

Sitting at the intersection of formal and informal collective action is participation in organised women's groups with the goal of collectively improving women's wellbeing, which may or may not extend to influencing structures of power and decision-making more broadly. Such participation could be considered formal or informal in light of the definitions above and below, and as such we have treated it separately for analysis purposes, particularly given that support for women's organised groups and activities was a core form of support common to all case studies and CSOs involved in the study.

Women's participation in such groups, particularly women's groups (although the case studies also capture instances of women's participation in mixed gender groups and multi-stakeholder groups focused on core challenges for village women), in and of itself constitutes a form of collective action in which women strengthen their agency and together with other members, make positive changes in women's lives—increasing both women's **power within** themselves and their **power with** others. Group participation and action can also be part of a pathway for women to exercise influence over broader structures of power and decision making in villages and beyond—both in those structures that influence governance and those structures that influence norms, particularly when groups seek to interact with and seek change in these structures of power (not all groups do). Diprose, Savirani, Setiawan and Francis (2020) and Setiawan et al. (2020) detail the benefits of group participation described by women in the research areas (some of which was evident in the discussion of individual changes discussed above), many of which also constitute a form of social capital that helps bolster women's agency, including:

- Strengthening and diversifying networks and friendships with other women,
- Fostering a sense of solidarity and understanding of the issues facing many women,
- Sharing skills, access to resources, and knowledge,
- Strengthening organisational and leadership skills and experience,
- Providing mutual support, a safe space and a source of protection,
- Building confidence and mutual support to overcome barriers and obstacles,
- Developing women's collective strength to have wider influence, and, among others
- Providing an organised platform as a basis for connecting and collaborating with other actors and groups.

In many of our research sites, CSOs supported village women—with the goal of bolstering their power and influence—to establish new women's groups or collaborated with existing groups. CSOs worked through these groups to bring village women together, help with skills development and in building confidence, and to support these women and their leaders navigate difficulties in each of the contexts where they were located. Women's essential capacity and readiness for acting individually and collectively form the basis for fostering

⁴ VeneKlasen and Miller (2002, 39) identify different types of power: Power over—The most commonly recognised form of power, power over, has many negative associations for people, such as repression, wealth, force, coercion, discrimination, corruption, and abuse. Power is seen as a win-lose relationship. Power with—to do with finding common ground among different interests and building collective strength. Power to—refers to the unique potential of every person to shape his or her life and world. Power within—has to do with a person's sense of self-worth and self-knowledge.

women's voice, influence and empowerment in public and private realms. In turn, this may bring about not only changes in women's own welfare and women's access to resources, services and programs and other opportunities that might improve their well-being, but also increase the participation of women in governance processes and their influence over wider social and political power structures over the longer term.

What is clear from the analysis is that supporting (or strengthening) the creation of safe, informal spaces and more formal, resourced, inclusive and organised groups for women, helped strengthen and grow women's social capital and their individual collective agency over time—the case studies provide multiple examples of this. All sorts of women's groups were newly established, or former groups strengthened, in all of our case studies: Pekka groups in Bangkalan and North Hulu Sungai, Women's School groups in Gresik and Pangkep, the 'La Tansa' group for female migrant workers in Central Lombok, Homeworkers Unions both in Bantul and Deli Serdang (Wardhani and Cahyaningrum, 2020; Cahyati and Cahyaningrum, 2020; Prabaningrum and Abheseka, 2020; Jamson and Sawiji, 2020; Rahayu and Abheseka, 2020; Rahayu and Ulfa, 2020; and Cahyati and Tanvil, 2020). In Cirebon, the Balai Sakinah 'Aisyiyah (or 'Aisyiyah women's groups) and Kespro cadres (Kesehatan Reproduksi - cadres group for reproductive health) were formed as part of 'Aisyiyah's organisational structure (Rahmawati and Ulfa, 2020).

In Labuhan Batu, the new Women's Independent Union (SPI – Serikat Perempuan Independen) established a Care Post to respond to cases of domestic violence and to provide a safe space for women to engage and gain support. The head of village SPI, Yuli, explains the importance of this Post for women:

"In the past people were more afraid to talk about family problems because it was taboo. People were often silent instead of talking, otherwise other people would gossip about it. But after the Posko SPI was established, now if there are small family problems people report them to the Posko. The Posko is a place for confiding [with other women]." (Yuli, the head of village SPI, Labuhan Batu, 13 October 2019)

In Tanggamus, a mixed group of villagers made up of women and men, formed a Task Force focusing on sexual and reproductive health issues, as well as domestic violence (Astrina and Tanaya, 2020). Similarly, in East Lombok, the Mele Maju Constituent Group established Balai Balaq, that being a reporting centre and a safe house for victims of domestic violence in the village (Capri and Sawiji, 2020). In North Central Timor, YABIKU worked with and strengthened existing Women Farmers Group to bridge gaps in domestic violence services and advocacy (Bayo and Tanaya, 2020).

In some cases, women's interaction and network building in informal spaces helped to consolidate a more formal group. In other cases, informal spaces provided women with a place to develop solidarity and share information when they were excluded from formal forums in the village. In Pangkep, for example, in the midst of an inconducive political environment and their exclusion from MusDes and Musrenbangdes, members of the Women's School established a Complaints Post in the village in relation to the delivery of social protection programs and related issues (Jamson and Sawiji, 2020). The Post signified an alternative form of women's collective influence and participation in village development processes, and has also provided an informal space for women's everyday engagement. In Central Lombok, La Tansa members have utilised women's informal spaces, such as chats and breaks between daily activities, as well as social media, to gather information on issues or challenges experienced by migrant workers (or their families), which have then been conveyed to DESBUMI cadres to help in handling these issues (Rahayu and Abheseka, 2020). Similarly in East Lombok, the Constituent Group serves as a safe, informal space for women to discuss, access services, and report cases of domestic violence in the village (Capri and Sawiji, 2020).

Group participation also helped build recognition of women's interests, women's collectivities and right to representation. While under the Village Law all community members can participate in MusDes and Musrenbangdes, in practice in many villages often participation in such forums is by invitation only. Recognising this reality in many villages, what was clear across the research sites was that the more such

groups were 'officially' recognised as legitimate and important groups by government authorities at different levels, the more they were likely to make it on to the invite list to attend decision-making forums or be included in other associations, networks, discussions and multi-stakeholder forums on a range of issues. For example, in the case study overview of the changes in the East Lombok presented in Section 4, we saw how through the formal recognition of the Maju Mele Constituent Group in the Village Regulation on the Protection of Women and Children, the group is now invited to village decision-making meetings. This has similarly been the case in other research villages where groups have been recognised in Village Regulations and activities driven by these groups are earmarked for Village Funding via these regulations.

Given many long-standing practices of exclusion, particularly in the public sphere, participation in the types of groups examined in this study helped strengthen village women's *power within*, that being their sense of self-worth and confidence, the *power* of women *to* act in public realms and their *power with* other women to engage in collective action and exercise greater (albeit not exclusive) *power over* structures of decision making and village development outcomes.

Informal collective action

The creation of informal and social arenas is relevant for women's collective action as it allows for reflexive possibilities in which participants can identify everyday problems as well as imagine alternative realities. Furthermore in creating, and through, such spaces women may also disrupt overwhelmingly male-dominated sites of decision-making (McEwan, 2005). Hence, in some contexts, it seems that women are more likely to engage with an informal collective action group or process than a formal one (Pandolfelli et al. 2008 and Agarwal 2000). This has been observed in both low-income settings (for example, Agarwal's (2000) research about collective action in rural villages in South Asia) and high-income settings (see Gerard and Kleiber's (2019) study of Norwegian women in the fishing industry). Women's informal strategies may play an important role in social cohesiveness (DeSena, 2000) and in turn, this strengthens women's collective influence across multiple domains, augmenting their '*power to*' and '*power with*' potential to effect change.

In addition to group participation, different forms of informal women's collective action were the most common broad type of collective action found in the research areas (see Diprose, Savirani, Setiawan and Francis, 2020). For women in rural areas who are deeply embedded in the social networks that shape village life, and for more vulnerable women, collective action is unlikely to involve 'collective protest on the streets' to often unknown authorities with significant power. Rather, it involves finding ways to exercise voice and agency in more formal authoritative structures, and most often in the most difficult contexts, through more informal and incremental network development with influential actors to influence structures of power and decision making. We provide some illustrative examples below.

Women created informal spaces which not only provided sources of mutual support, but which also helped build *power with* other women in everyday activities. There were many informal spaces in which women gathered, built relationships or strengthened networks and friendships and used these to provide mutual support and to access other forms of social capital and resources. Common spaces included WhatsApp Groups, social media groups, gathering at Early Education Centres (PAUD), health centres and, among others, often in particular spaces in markets.

Throughout the case studies, we also seek many examples of women actively taking up leadership and organising roles to build/extend networks among women. Through groups, women built initial networks and then extended these networks to other women over time through active organising and information sharing (see also the excerpts of women's life journeys in Setiawan, Beech Jones, Diprose and Savirani, 2020). In Pangkep, for example, an island woman, Cahaya (see above), had always been enthusiastic and proactive in building networks with other women on her island (Jamson and Sawiji, 2020). She approached YKPM staff and offered to help organise women's groups for the Women's School in other islands in the village. She became

the general coordinator of these groups, concurrent with her role as a leader of the women's group in her own island. Cahaya played a significant role in bridging YKPM with other island women, as well in motivating and building interests among women to participate in Women's School activities.

Participatory data collection was another informal form of collective action undertaken by rural village women. This not only involves women participating in the process of data collection in a way that grows their own awareness of common issues facing village women, but the data can then be used as a means of lobbying the village and district officials for new initiatives. This was evident in the Bangkalan (Wardhani and Cahyaningrum, 2020) and Central Lombok (Rahayu and Abheseka, 2020) case studies and in many others.

Building networks and ties between village women and other influential actors was a common form of informal women's collective action to exercise influence and bring about change. Women gradually, through everyday interactions, sought to build individual and group networks with influential and authoritative figures in the village to garner support for their initiatives. We have seen both types this throughout stories of change presented in this volume. A clear example is how women in the Women's Schools initially gained support from the Village Head and others for their activities in Pangkep in Sulawesi (Jamson and Sawiji, 2020). In many other examples, women also directly lobbied authoritative actors through informal interpersonal networks. Acts of discursive and other forms of protest and resistance, were a rarer form of informal collective action undertaken to pressure resistant authorities for change, as women preferred in most cases not to resort to this given how deeply integrated they were in village social life. However, when relations had soured to a significant extent with authority figures who deliberately and persistently sought to exclude women from decision-making forums, then they did resort to this type of action, as was evident also in the efforts of the Women's Schools in Pangkep (Jamson and Sawiji, 2020).

Women's networked collective action: Interacting processes

As mentioned, many of these forms of informal collective action intersected and overlapped with other forms, including formal collective action, to constitute broader processes of women's collective action over time. Across the research sites, particularly in the most difficult contexts, the study observed such larger processes that involved village women's efforts to establish relationships and networks of trust with authoritative actors who had influence over governance processes and social norms, or who could provide additional sources of knowledge, resources and power to support women to strengthen their cause. This included CSOs that bring with them resources, knowledge, new ideas and strategies, networks and access to authority structures among others, in their connections with village women. Then, women advocated for support from these community, state, social, or other authoritative actors for their initiatives. Together, women and other actors then, collectively, endeavoured to influence governance, development, policy programs and structures of power to be more gender inclusive. This study refers to these processes as women's *networked* collective action.

What we see in these *processes of women's networked collective action* playing out over time is essentially women building or strengthening networks of trust with other women (through groups and informal spaces), and with other community members, especially authoritative actors, often through engagement in everyday settings. Village women leverage these newly established or existing networks to garner support for their endeavours. This creates *multiple sources of pressure* on authoritative actors and ultimately decision-making forums and power structures, so as to influence outcomes. Such processes are helpful for overcoming challenges or barriers in the enabling environment, particularly resistance among authoritative and influential figures to gender inclusiveness. Women's informal spaces and more formal groups bolstered this process by extending networks, providing a new arena in which to build individual and collective agency through shared knowledge, skills and resources, providing mutual support and a source of protection, and fostering a sense of solidarity and collective agency.

In some cases cross-stakeholder pressure sometimes manifested through these networks alone, and in other cases was formalised through establishing multi-stakeholder groups or forums involving village women, other community members, and often included influential leaders from within and beyond the village. Such groups and forums further strengthened these cross-stakeholder networks and provided some of the same kinds of benefits of groups mentioned above—shared resources, knowledge and skills. When such forums (and other women’s groups) were formally recognised and became embedded in the village through regular activities, this often provided the mechanism for further legitimising the women’s agenda, giving it greater continuity beyond electoral cycles or the tenure of particular individuals leading the cross-stakeholder forum.

We can see these interconnected processes take place in the case study of the Labuhan Batu research village (Astrina and Tanaya, 2020). In Labuhan Batu village, while the Village Head was reasonably supportive of the formation of the village Women’s Independent Union (SPI – Serikat Perempuan Independen) group, the ‘formal’ process of recognising the group was significantly delayed because it was not deemed a priority for the village. Recognition of the group was important for being able to conduct activities unencumbered, particularly those involving other villagers, groups and members of the village government itself. Thus, village women, in particular the leader of the village SPI, leveraged the support of the Chairperson of the BPD and others to create additional sources of pressure on the village government to speed up the process. Once the group was ‘officially’ formed, it undertook a series of training and other activities on gender awareness, and issues related to domestic violence involving village leaders and all manner of other social groups in the village.

Gradually through these knowledge sharing activities, support was garnered to establish the cross-stakeholder LBK (Community-Based Services Forum), made up of SPI women, village leaders and many other groups in the village. Continued lobbying both from SPI and through cross-stakeholder collective action via the LBK, successfully led to the enactment of Village Regulation No. 2, 2018 on the Implementation of Protection of Women and Children Victims of Violence under the Village Law, and the promise of a budget allocation from the Village Fund to support related activities. The Deputy Chair of the village women’s SPI, who also heads the LBK, had a core role in spearheading the collaboration. She was regularly in contact with the Chairperson of the BPD and the Village Head to ensure that the Village Regulation was drafted, ratified (and now implemented) by village government institutions.

CSOs, their support for village women and wider strategies

CSOs also use broader strategies, not only to support village women and help to influence the structures of power and decision-making in villages, but also to undertake their advocacy to influence broader changes in the districts. This too constitutes a structured, organised and resourced form of women’s collective action. Such actions have implications for the ways changes occur on the ground and in policy and decision making, again with significant variation (see Diprose, Savirani, Setiawan and Francis, 2020). Alongside an examination of grassroots women’s collective action and changing women’s influence in village development and the implementation of the Village Law, the cases illustrate the ways CSOs have used different strategies to support women’s influence and changes in the enabling environment at different levels, ultimately to help shape the structures of power and decision making in different contexts to be more conducive to gender inclusion and accommodating of women’s self-identified interests.

What we can see emerging in the within-case analysis presented here is that such strategies and approaches vary according to each CSO’s internal organisational structure, the way they connect to their partners at the local level and to villages, how they sequence and resource their activities in different ways, and the strategies they adopt to support village women to grow their agency and influence and to facilitate women’s collective action. For example, there are CSOs in which national offices play a significant role in organising and managing project activities; while there are others that instead collaborate with and work through local networks. Some CSOs directly organise village women, while others support the formation of multi-stakeholder forums that

then become a lobby group for policy advocacy; some CSOs combine the two strategies. Across all the strategies used, each has strengths and trade-offs, and decisions are highly contingent on how organisations are structured from the outset, their resource availability and ideologies. They are also contingent on the context within which CSOs operate, especially the history of each region in terms of how women are organised, what groups and policies exist and how inclusive they are, the nature of socio-cultural norms around gender, core challenges for women, as well as other aspects of context dynamics that create barriers to or opportunities for improved gender inclusion (see Diprose, Savirani, Setiawan and Francis, 2020).

In Bangkalan and North Hulu Sungai for example, the Pekka women's groups initially focused on economic empowerment activities, such as savings and loans or the development of village-owned enterprises (Wardhani and Cahyaningrum, 2020; Cahyati and Cahyaningrum, 2020). The memberships of these groups provided the pathway to advocate for change in social protection for women. In Cirebon, 'Aisiyah established a new branch of its organisation at the village level. Bolstered by strong support at the district level, this grassroots branch was able to successfully push for new Village and District Regulations on the Protection of Women and Children (Rahmawati and Ulfa, 2020). In contrast to these is the North Central Timor research village, where advocacy has been conducted through formerly established Women Farmers Groups and newly established paralegal groups (Bayo and Tanaya, 2020).

4. Trajectories of change in contexts over time: advancement and regression

Throughout the case studies, we have observed changes in women's everyday lives and wellbeing and in their influence on village development and the structures of power and decision making over time through collective action. This has had broader implications for changes in contexts over time in terms of how conducive social and institutional structures are for women's continued opportunities to exercise voice and to influence public life. However, it is important to note that when such changes have occurred, they have not always taken place in a continuously upward and positive fashion. Obstacles and challenges, but also opportunities, emerge over time that can advance or regress changes in gender inclusiveness and women's empowerment in the broader context. The pathways of change can also diverge between village, district, and even at national levels. In the case studies we see that sometimes after improvements in women's influence on village decision-making, change might regress at the village level while broadly progressing at the district level in institutional structures and policy-making processes and policy focus, or vice versa. In navigating these changes over time, both village women and the CSOs have had to be adaptive in responding to constraints, requiring them to work across different scales of intervention – individual, village, and district levels, employing various strategies as explained above.

Different trajectories of change, where the progress made was not always at the same speed or direction, are evident in many of the case studies presented in this volume. In Pangkep, for example, the Village Head elections changed the political dynamics in the village, as the newly elected Village Head considered the Women's School to be aligned with his political rival (Jamson and Sawiji, 2020). Before the election, the Women's School received significant support from the prior village government. The new Village Head, however, retracted support for the Women's School, excluding them from participating in MusDes and Musrenbangdes and from accessing the Village Fund. While the dynamics of village political context created setbacks for women at the village level, women's political participation both at the district and village levels strengthened in other ways. As mentioned, one of the group leaders of the Women's School was nominated as a candidate of district legislative elections in 2019. Moreover, the district government signed a Memorandum of Understanding for a gender-based evaluation of district development programs, and agreed to replicate Women's School in other villages in the district. Figure 2 below illustrates how the pathways of changes in Pangkep diverged between the village and district levels.

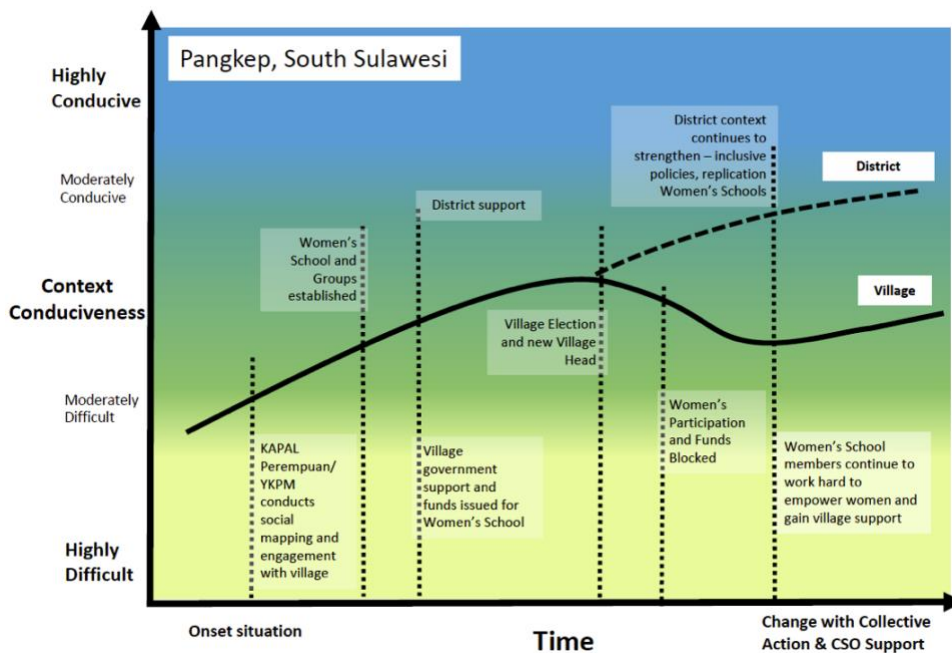


Figure 2. Trajectory of change in Pangkep.

Another example of a diverging pathways of change is evident in the case study on homeworkers from the Deli Serdang research village, where change occurred at different speeds across various levels. The formation of Homeworkers Union in the village helped homeworkers increase their bargaining power and develop good relationships with the village government (Cahyati and Tanvil, 2020). The advocacy for the Village Regulation that protects the rights of these homeworkers, stalled however, and the homeworkers' access to Village Fund is yet to be officially allocated. In contrast, at the district and provincial levels, formal recognition of the Homeworkers Union at these levels provided the homeworkers with access to district government grants and various development programs. As depicted in Figure 3, the advocacy for a regulation to protect homeworkers has received significant support at the district level, but has stalled in its ratification with some politicians arguing there is no national-level legal basis for such a regulation.

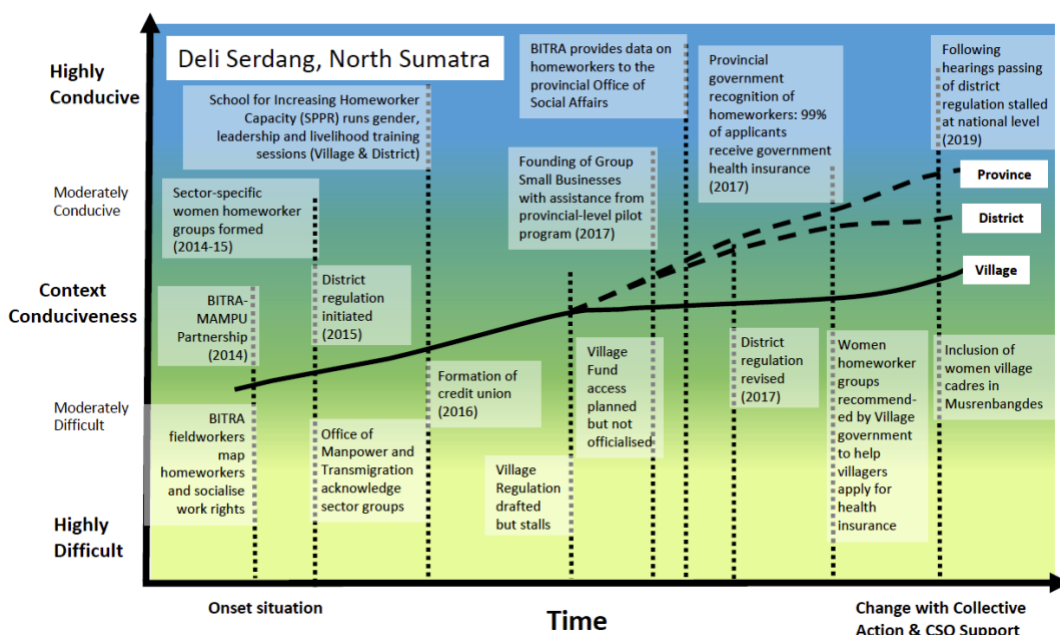


Figure 3. Trajectory of change in Deli Serdang.

5. Trajectories of change: Variation by type of context

As mentioned previously, context dynamics and variation in the constraints and opportunities across contexts, shape the patterns of women's grassroots collective action and the strategies that CSOs and village women

utilise to adapt to and push for changes to improve women’s wellbeing and influence on structures of power and decision making. Based on the onset dynamics (prior to CSO support and the upscaling of women’s collective action), the research sites displayed the features of three main types (of the four categories discussed above), which accommodated interacting village and district dynamics: highly difficult contexts, moderately difficult contexts, and moderately conducive contexts for gender inclusion and women’s empowerment. Research sites with highly difficult contexts at the onset included North Central Timor, Labuhan and Bangkalan, in which initially, village and district environments were highly restrictive for women, particularly in terms of social norms and in women’s political, policy and village development influence. Research sites with moderately difficult contexts where there were some restrictions for women but also opportunities at either village or district levels, included Gresik, Cirebon, East Lombok, Pangkep, Central Lombok and Deli Serdang, while those with moderately conducive contexts at the onset included Tanggamus, Bantul and North Hulu Sungai.

Across the research sites, after significant women’s collective action and support from CSOs in the research areas which is evident in the case studies in this volume, change occurred within the contexts themselves, with each research site (at village level, but with some interaction with the district level), resulting in improvements to greater or lesser degrees in the opportunities for women’s influence on policy making and especially village development and, albeit more slowly, on social norms. Diprose, Savirani, Setiawan and Francis (2020), found little evidence of similar changes in research areas where such collective action had not taken place (the control sites)— see Figure 4.

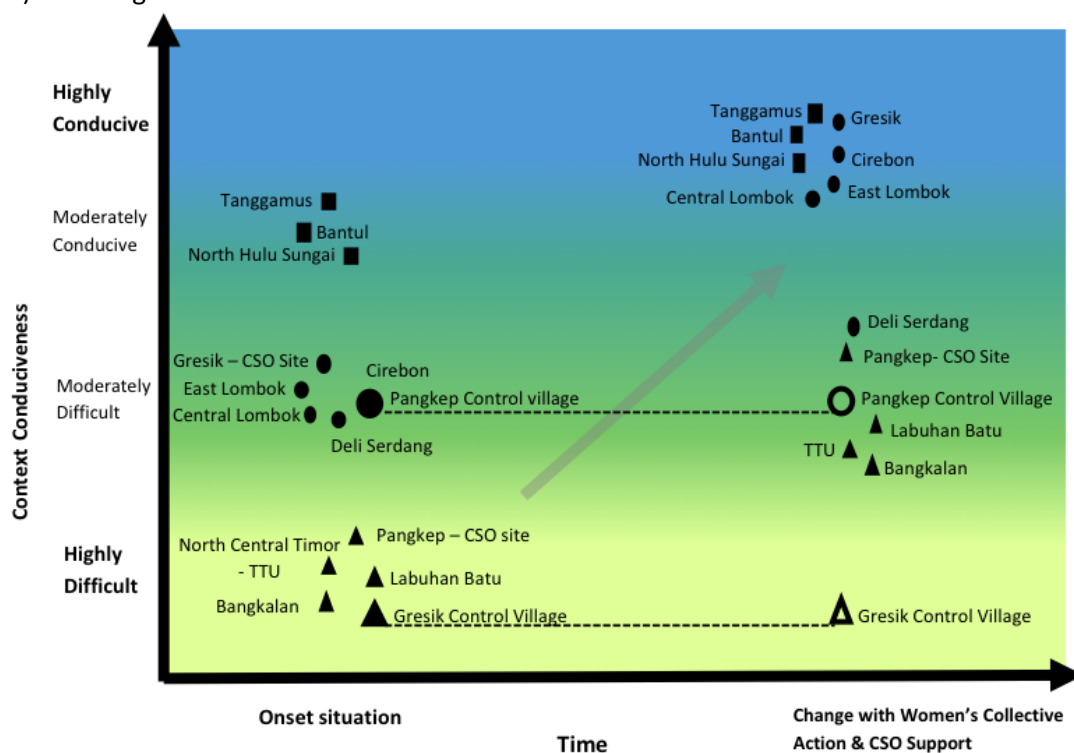


Figure 4. Changes over time in the research sites after several years of women’s collective action and CSO support.

However, in the case studies within each stream of context type, we see different types of pathways of change. First, in contexts that displayed the features of being highly difficult at the onset in terms of women’s involvement in the structures of power, their influence on decision making and in terms of restrictive social norms, change was certainly possible, but tended to occur more slowly and incrementally as a result of the factors discussed above. Second, in moderately difficult contexts, change tended to be more fragmented. Third, women’s collective action in highly conducive contexts tended to pave the way for more institutionalised forms of change. Below we provide illustrative examples of the pathways of change in particular research sites (a full set of these trajectories can be found in Diprose, Savirani, Setiawan and Francis, 2020).

Pathway 1: Incremental change in highly difficult contexts

Highly difficult contexts for women's influence and in the ways their collective action might lead to change are those in which policies, regulation and programs, provide weak, if any, support in encouraging women's participation, and there is little political willingness among government and public figures to support such agenda at both district and village levels. Highly difficult contexts tend to display the features of strong social, patriarchal norms that limit women's influence in public sphere, as well as cultural taboos on discussing issues affecting women, particularly sensitive issues such domestic violence and reproductive health. In these contexts there are often significant risks for and in some cases resistance to women's collective action and CSO advocacy. In the research sites, these dynamics constrained the pathways for change in ways that rendered such change to be slower and more incremental, particularly in terms of changing gendered social norms on both sensitive sectoral issues (as mentioned above) and in terms of women's participation in decision making in public arenas.

In two of these cases, the issue of concern for women's collective action was social protection (Bangkalan and Pangkep). While this focus was less controversial compared with other sectoral issues (particularly because wider communities might also benefit from improved services or livelihoods opportunities), in these two areas, social norms for women's participation in structures of power and public decision making were particularly restrictive. In Bangkalan, for example, Wardhani and Cahyaningrum (2020), show how constraints were evident in the initial resistance from village authorities to new activities to support female-headed families and a lack of community interest in offered by PEKKA. Over time, however, through a carefully sequenced approach to the village government for village access and in building support for village women, a village Pekka Union (particularly for female-headed households) was formed and a Savings and Loans Group was established in the village. Through predominantly informal forms of collective action and women's wider *networked* collective action over time, the women's group was able to lobby and assist the village government to ratify the 2017 Village Regulation on Marriage Verification (Wardhani and Cahyaningrum, 2020). Even so, this Village Regulation has not been able to entirely reconfigure the existing structures of power in the village. Conservative social norms have only begun to change incrementally. While women have become involved in the public sphere, at the time of the research, their involvement still revolved around their domestic duties and position, whereas decision-making processes were still dominated by senior men.

In the two other cases, the issue of concern for women that was the focus of their collective action was partly or wholly related to tackling the sensitive issue of gender-based violence (North Central Timor in NTT and Labuhan Batu in North Sumatra). These cases illustrate a sub-set of difficulties for tackling such issues that are entrenched in social norms that may be more permissive of such violence or that limit the acceptability of pathways for women to seek protection or redress through religious, customary, ethnic, state or other institutions and processes. Such challenges were similar in moderately difficult contexts in which women sought to influence similar types of sensitive social norms. However, what differentiates Labuhan Batu and North Central Timor is that in North Central Timor, this sectoral focus intersected with other restrictive social norms on women's limited roles in public decision making (which was slightly less the case in Labuhan Batu), rendering this context extremely difficult to change.

In the North Central Timor research area—as is illustrated in Figure 5 and in the case study by Bayo and Tanaya (2020)—there were crucial improvements in the ways that domestic violence cases were handled at both the village and district levels. The district in particular, introduced significant new polices for handling gender-based violence and for broader women's empowerment. Village women, with the support of YABIKU, have organised paralegal groups and advocated for a Village Regulation on handling domestic violence cases, which have traditionally been responded to through custom and tradition mediation mechanisms. Many village women argued that these mechanisms have tended to subordinate women's interests and protection

to those of men, and that there are few sanctions to prevent further violence. As Bayo and Tanaya (2020) highlight, such issues have tended to be compounded by other social norms and religious values in which divorce is rarely an option. Progress on the Village Regulation, however, stalled once the district regulation was passed, with some in the village leadership arguing that such a Village Regulation was no longer necessary.

Community education and awareness of women’s rights, access to modified processes for handling domestic violence cases via the state or modified custom and tradition mechanisms that the new district regulation has sought to influence, and other very recent changes evident in the case study, have, so far, only partially shifted strong, restrictive social norms on women’s rights, roles and protection at the village level in TTU. The slow, incremental shift in social norms results from the long history of strong patriarchal structures that exclude women from village decision-making, norms that privilege men’s rights (and often blame victims of domestic violence) and have normalised physical and verbal abuse, the limited resources available women’s activities in the village, and women rarely holding village leadership positions, which could create opportunities for women to advocate on issues of concern for women, among others. Customs and traditions remain the main reference point for handling domestic violence cases, with many cases not being formally reported. At the time the research was undertaken, there had been partial changes in the village-level collective understanding of the various forms of domestic violence, but cognitive changes in understandings of gender equality were yet to manifest in strong changes in behavioural norms.

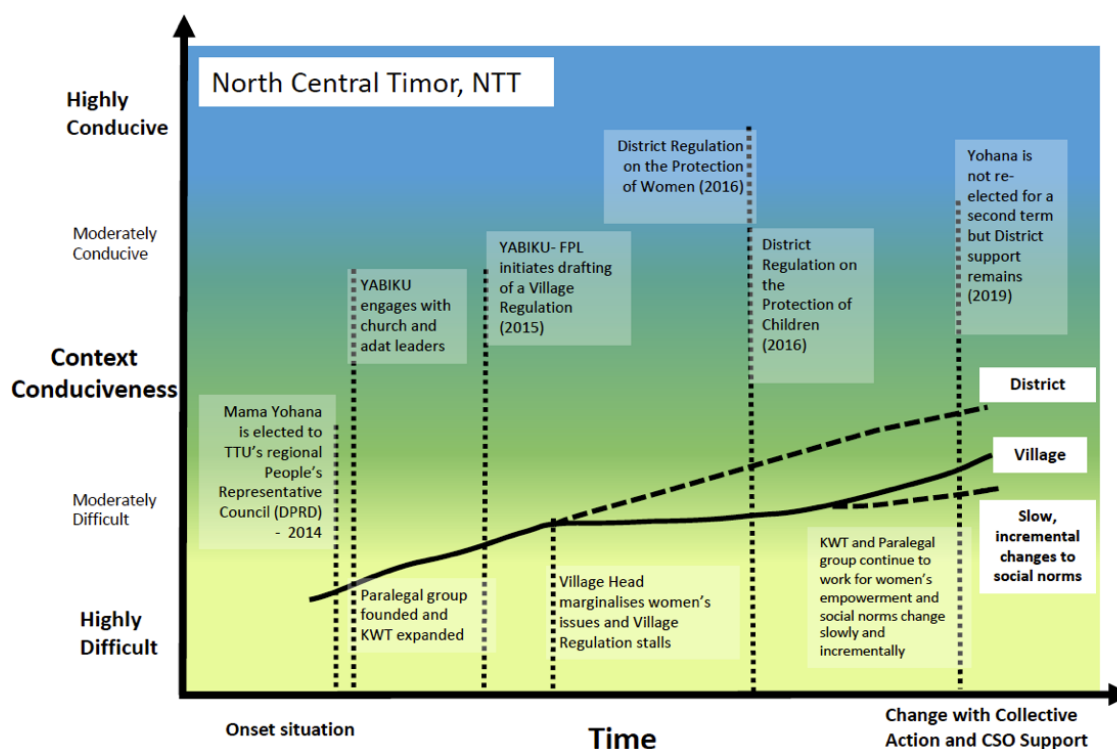


Figure 5. Trajectory of change in North Central Timor.

On the other side of the archipelago, Figure 6 below illustrates the slow, incremental changes in our research village in Labuhan Batu in North Sumatra, in which the prevalence of domestic violence has also been of concern for women. In this village, following different forms of women’s collective action, the SPI union was recognised as village government partner, particularly in tackling domestic violence. This has contributed to institutional changes, which are evident in the way decisions are made, and in the enacted Village Regulation. However, at the same time, similar to other case studies in this volume, the social norms that contribute to high prevalence of domestic violence had only partially begun to shift at the time the research was completed (Astrina and Tanaya, 2020).

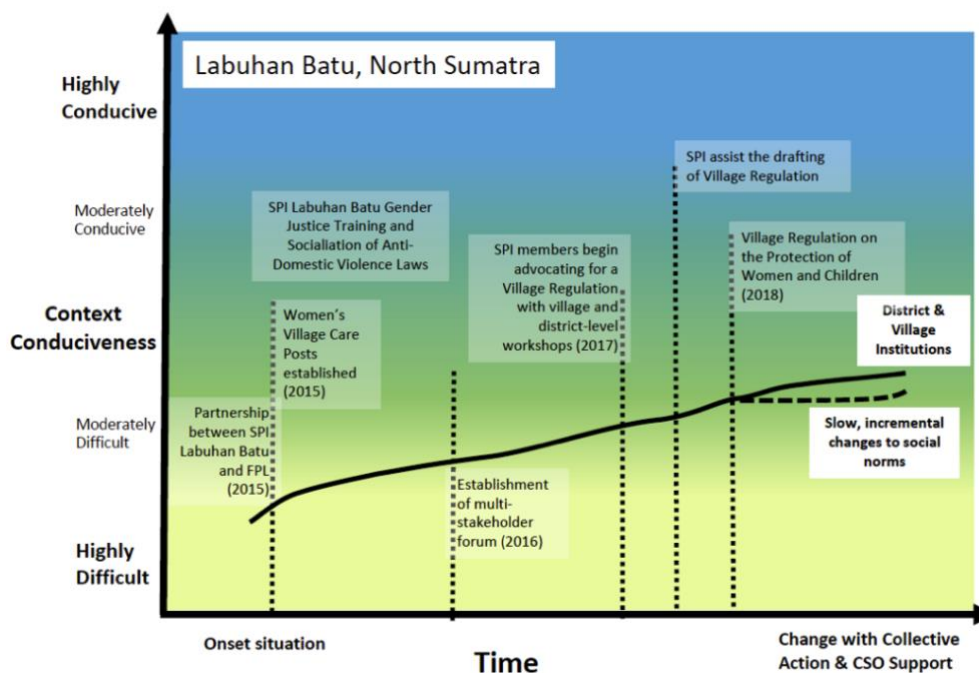


Figure 6. Trajectory of change in Labuhan Batu.

Pathway 2: Faster but sometimes fragmented changes in moderately difficult contexts

Moderately difficult contexts display many of the features of highly difficult contexts, but there are indicators of changes occurring at either district or village levels, albeit sometimes in fragmented ways. Such fragmentation tended to be most prevalent at the village level in which change initially advanced but then sometimes regressed when new barriers to gender inclusion arose, and often advanced again after village women made significant efforts to overcome these barriers. The research areas displaying such features include Gresik, Central and East Lombok, Cirebon, Deli Serdang. As these contexts were less constraining than highly difficult contexts, the pathway of change was more significantly upward in its trajectory towards greater gender inclusion, through a multitude of overlapping forms of collective action, and change often occurred at greater speed than in more highly difficult contexts.

A clear example of such upwardly progressive change in gender inclusion is evident in Gresik (see Figure 7). Prabaningrum and Abheseka (2020) show how women's advocacy and collective action were successful in garnering support from both the district and village government, which resulted in a Village Fund allocation for Women's School, increased women's participation in development planning meetings, and the replication of Women's Schools in other villages as stated in the District Medium-term Development Plan. Early on however, the Women's School faced some resistance at the village level, for which they leveraged district support to encourage the village leadership to be more supportive of the School.

Similar progress can be seen in Cirebon, East Lombok and Central Lombok, however their trajectory of changes is more fragmented to varied degrees at the village level. While we see overwhelmingly positive changes in women's influence and benefits from SPI village development in these villages, they did experience challenges over time. In Cirebon, for example while the Village Head was supportive, at one point some community figures resisted and perceived negatively women's participation in village meetings, fuelled by social jealousy particularly among some of those who did not participate in the women's group activities supported by 'Aisyiah. Although these women persevered to build support over time (Rahmawati and Ulfa, 2020).

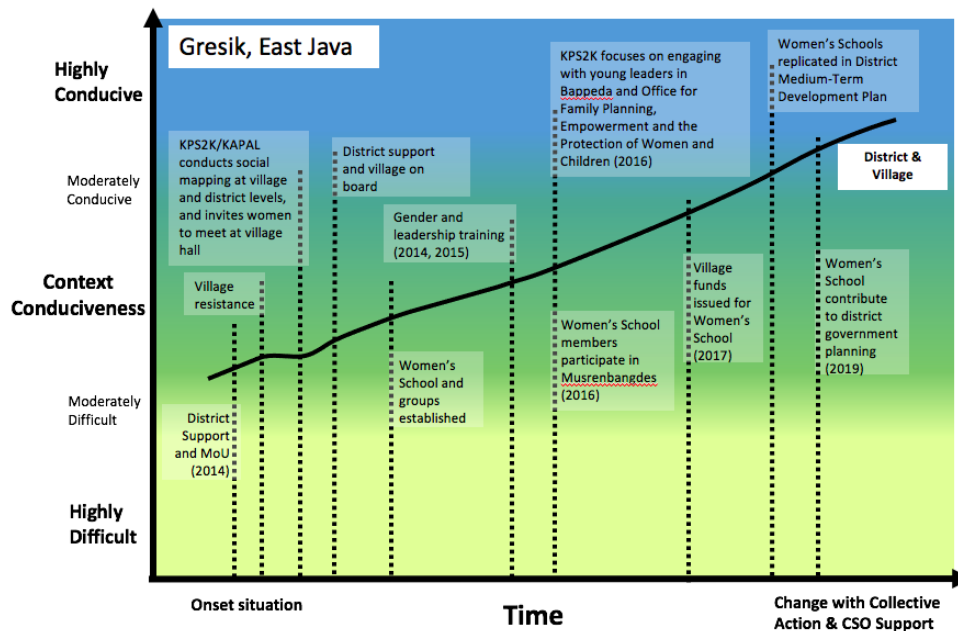


Figure 7. Trajectory of change in Gresik.

In Central Lombok, the close collaboration between DESBUMI and local village government produced many benefits for migrant workers in the village, but also created resentment from other institutions in the village in competing for Village Funds allocations (Rahayu and Abheseka, 2020). At the time the research was finalised, some (albeit a small proportion) of Central Lombok villagers still preferred the faster, illicit route for work migration, signifying slower, incremental changes to social perceptions on the risks of illegal migration. In East Lombok, successful advocacy led to rapid ratification of Village and District Regulations on domestic violence, however changes to social norms have lagged behind and occurred incrementally (Capri and Sawiji, 2020). At the time of the research, strong social and religious norms against divorce still rendered some women unwilling to formally report their husbands for domestic violence. Furthermore, some women who had made such formal reports, still experienced social stigma and sanctions from the community as they were seen to be criminalising their husbands. Such social norms have tended to constrain progress in implementing formal regulations to protect victims of domestic violence.

Pathway 3: Increasingly institutionalised change in moderately conducive contexts

In highly conducive contexts (for example, Tanggamus, Bantul), there tends to be less resistance to gender inclusiveness, women's collective action and women's representation in decision-making positions and forums. In such places there is often a longer, existing history of women's advocacy, participation in groups and decision-making forums, and/or political willingness to support change. In this socio-political climate in the research sites, formal, institutionalised forms of collective action were increasingly prevalent compared with other places, including women's (collective) participation in village government planning. Institutionalised forms of gender inclusion and women's influence on structures of power and decision-making helped to ensure the longer-term sustainability of women groups' activities and involvement in village development.

Both DAMAR in Tanggamus and Yasanti in Bantul have had a long history of advocacy and policy influence to improve gender inclusion in policy and decision-making processes as well as attention to the specific concern of women in each respective district (Astrina and Ulfa, 2020; Rahayu and Ulfa, 2020). This long history has helped them build broad networks and support at district and village levels, creating a moderately conducive context at the onset of support from MAMPU for CSOs to scale out and up their support to new village women and on new issues. Less context constraints allowed for the more rapid ratification of Village Regulations as a result of women's collective action in both places, with regulations ratified in approximately two years. Moreover in Bantul, the formation of the Homeworkers Union helped the women to gain access to MusDes and Musrenbangdes at the village level (see Figure 8).

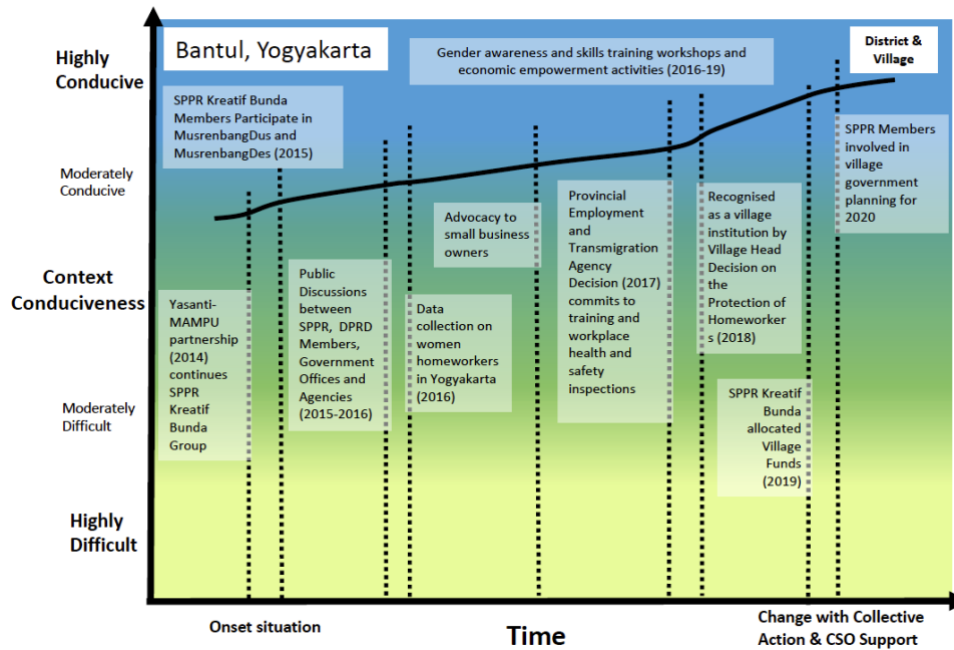


Figure 8. Trajectory of Change in Bantul.

While North Hulu Sungai did not have such a history of advocacy or of policies already focused on issues of concern to women or on gender inclusion, the political leadership at village and district levels was highly open to supporting such changes, demonstrating how political openness to gender inclusion can help overcome what otherwise might be indicators of difficult context constraints. It is for this reason North Hulu Sungai was deemed to be moderately conducive at the onset. Pekka group members established a village-owned enterprise, which was legalised through Village Regulation No. 4, 2015. Women’s participation in village meetings was also formalised through Village Head Decision No. 5, 2019, which has guaranteed the involvement of women’s organisation representatives in development planning meetings (Musrenbangdes). Not only increasing women’s political representation, women’s participation in village development has also increased the allocation of village budget for women-focused programs and activities.

Conclusion

The introduction to this edited volume has highlighted many forms and processes of change that have occurred in twelve of the research villages across Indonesia, which are presented in the case studies in this volume. We have not only identified how women’s collective action has resulted in influence on Village Law implementation in ways that produce more diverse outcomes for village social, economic and other forms of village development, but also the different types of intersecting and overlapping changes that are occurring at individual, community, and institutional levels and more broadly in social and political contexts. We have sought to identify the high degree of variability of changes observed in women’s lives and their communities through the research and in the case studies presented (see also Diprose, Savirani, Setiawan and Francis, 2020). We have also sought to illustrate some of the key factors influencing these changes—context constraints and opportunities, the ways women’s collective action have helped forged these changes, and strategies employed by the CSOs in supporting collective action—as well as core aspects of the pathways by which such changes have occurred in our research villages in different types of contexts. The processes of change illustrated in this edited volume, whether at speed or scale, or in slower incremental steps, are both transformative and inspirational. Women have, to varying degrees, overcome barriers, created new opportunities, and provided solutions to issues affecting themselves and others, and sought to tackle these issues in a multitude of ways, including through shaping village development policies and in slowly and incrementally influencing social norms to be less restrictive for women.

It is evident across the case studies that the processes of change are highly dynamic, and the pathways are diverse and divergent. It takes a village to forge significant change on difficult issues—the case studies provide many examples of how women seek change collectively in building networks of support from other village government, influential social leaders, and community groups and members that are imperative for such changes to occur. CSOs have supported women in this process, particularly in strengthening their individual and collective capacity to influence change and in navigating context dynamics. Equally essential is ensuring women's collective action is sustainable and such changes are enduring, particularly after the CSOs cease their support, by filling the implementation gaps in Village Law. The gaps can be rectified by securing policies and regulations that are gender inclusive and participatory, and providing women with access to village development meetings and the Village Fund so that their needs and rights are met. The stories of changes crafted in this volume provide palpable evidence of how, when women are able to buck the trend and influence change in rural development, such empowerment has far-reaching gains beyond individual lives, improving that of communities.

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