

Women's Empowerment In Village Budget From A Gender Perspective: A Case Study in Gampong Jambo Papeun, South Aceh

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Abstract: *This community service program explores women's empowerment in village budgeting from a gender perspective in Gampong Jambo Papeun, South Aceh. Women's participation in budget planning remains limited due to cultural norms, lack of awareness, and restricted access to decision-making forums. Employing a participatory approach, the program incorporated surveys, interviews, interactive workshops, and deliberation simulations to enhance women's budget literacy and advocacy skills. These activities encouraged women to identify and articulate needs often overlooked in village planning, such as health, skills training, and economic empowerment. Mentoring and simplified educational materials helped maintain their engagement. The findings suggest that gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) can enhance inclusivity while striking a balance between physical infrastructure and social development priorities. Although the initiative successfully raised awareness and participation, challenges such as low attendance and its focus on a single village limit its broader applicability. Nevertheless, this case offers a practical model for promoting women's involvement in rural budgeting processes, contributing to more equitable and sustainable local development.*

Keywords: *Women's empowerment; Gender-responsive budgeting; Participatory approach; Village development; Rural governance.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The processes of development and budget support are essential elements in project management and public administration, ensuring that resources are allocated and utilized effectively to achieve specific objectives. Wardani's analysis of the Indonesian national planning and budgeting system highlights a crucial aspect of integrating development planning with budgeting—namely, that disjointed approaches can hinder the achievement of state objectives, such as reducing maternal mortality and stunting. This analysis highlights the necessity of an integrated planning approach that aligns project execution with broader national goals (Wardani, 2025).

Incorporating stakeholder feedback and public participation into the budgeting process enables governments to align funding with community needs and priorities better (Ivanova et al., 2017). One critical group that should be included in budget planning is women. Recognizing gender perspectives in budget policy is increasingly seen as essential for promoting gender equality through effective public financial management (PFM). Gender budgeting involves assessing how budgetary allocations impact gender-related outcomes and ensuring that these outcomes align with broader social equity objectives. Pradnya argues that neglecting a gender perspective in budgeting processes undermines equity and justice, which are vital for community well-being (Pradnya, 2020). Numerous studies emphasize the importance of integrating gender analysis throughout the budgeting process to inform policy decisions that promote inclusive development.

One of the essential methods for effective gender budgeting is integrating gender considerations into public financial management systems. Bilyk et al. highlight that when budgets are crafted with an understanding of gender dynamics, it can lead to improved resource allocation that supports women's rights and enhances gender equality initiatives (Bilyk et al., 2022). Additionally, Moser-Plautz and Korać point out that countries like Austria have established benchmarks for incorporating gender perspectives into budgeting processes, illustrating a commitment to achieving gender equality outcomes across various policy areas (Moser-Plautz & Korać, 2020). This approach aligns with the principles of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), which

utilizes fiscal policies to promote equality, thereby transforming the way governments approach budgetary decisions to attain equitable results (Curristine et al., 2021).

The relationship between budget policy and gender equality in Indonesia has become increasingly significant in public discourse and policy development. Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is recognized as an essential tool for promoting gender equality by ensuring that government budgets and expenditures address the diverse needs of both men and women. A key framework for understanding the implications of gender-responsive budgeting in Indonesia is highlighted by Setyawan et al. (2019), who emphasize that gender-based budgeting policies can have a considerable impact on socio-economic growth at both micro and macro levels. GRB incorporates a gender perspective into public financial management systems, thereby making budgetary decisions more aligned with addressing societal inequalities (Curristine et al., 2021). An important aspect to consider is the integration of gender analysis within local government units. To effectively implement Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB), targeted training in gender analysis is crucial for regional work units (Nurhaeni & Yuliarti, 2016).

The village fund policy, established by Law No. 6 of 2014, allocates significant funding to villages to enhance local governance and development. These village funds have the potential to alleviate poverty and improve the quality of life for rural communities. However, practical experiences indicate that these allocations are not entirely equitable, often leaving women marginalized in the planning and utilization of these resources (Faiziyah & Salim, 2020). This highlights the challenge of women's underrepresentation in village government structures, which can significantly impact budget allocation. Affirmative action policies designed to enhance women's participation in politics are often recognized as a means to combat the marginalization women face in various aspects of life (Gustian & Putra, 2020). However, despite the progress made through these policies, their implementation frequently encounters obstacles posed by the prevailing patriarchal culture within village government frameworks (Firdaus et al., 2024). These cultural and social barriers often lead to low female participation in village development, ultimately diminishing the effectiveness of existing policies (Charani et al., 2023).

Community service initiatives in Indonesia have been extensively implemented, with a specific focus on enhancing women's participation. One such initiative, conducted by Supriyanti et al. (2021), focused on helping women utilize village self-managed funds in Talibeng Village, Karangasem. This activity aimed to promote village development in line with gender equality. Additionally, another community service project in Letta Bone Village, themed around gender-responsive village fund management, aimed to educate the community on how to effectively utilize village funds to develop programs that address the needs of both men and women in a balanced manner (Syukur et al., 2022). Furthermore, the theme of community service focused on enhancing women's participation in development has been pursued by Daniel (Todapa, 2024), Ayu et al. (Lestari et al., 2024), and Isranuddin (Harun et al., 2023). Their efforts aim to strengthen community awareness regarding the significance of women's involvement in the development of their region. Reviewing the aforementioned community service activities, it is evident that most programs are designed to promote gender-based development by concentrating on the stages of village fund management. While the material of the study outlines all phases of village budgeting, a key distinction between previous community service activities and this outreach initiative lies in its increased emphasis on the stages of budget preparation and the monitoring of implementation. Thus, active participation from women is anticipated from the initial stages of program formulation and village fund execution to ensure balanced village development that upholds gender equality.

Women's involvement in village program planning discussions is often limited. In Jambo Papeun Village, meetings are frequently scheduled at night, which restricts women's attendance. When they do participate, their representation tends to be minimal, primarily comprising a few female officials. This issue is further exacerbated by a lack of awareness regarding the importance of their engagement, causing many women to perceive public affairs as a male domain. Consequently, proposals presented at the Village Development Planning Meeting (Musrenbangdes) often prioritize

physical infrastructure, overlooking programs that cater to women's specific needs, such as skills training and reproductive health.

Addressing this issue is of utmost urgency. If left unresolved, village development will continue to be unbalanced and ineffective. The Village Law mandates active citizen participation, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlight the crucial role of gender equality in development. Empowering women in budgeting is vital for breaking the cycle of socio-economic inequality. This initiative seeks to raise awareness about the significance of women's involvement in planning forums in Gampong Jambo, Papeun. Our goal is to equip women with budget literacy, enabling them to identify and effectively express their needs.

The anticipated outcomes of this initiative include enhanced women's empowerment and a stronger advocacy for programs that specifically cater to their needs and concerns. For village governments, this initiative aims to foster the creation of more inclusive policies. Ultimately, this community effort will contribute to the overall welfare of the village by promoting equitable and sustainable development. This case study will add to the field of political science, particularly within the realms of local politics and gender studies, offering valuable insights for researchers. Furthermore, it will establish a straightforward intervention model that other villages can replicate to improve women's involvement in development planning. Success will be evaluated through increased participation of women, the inclusion of gender-focused programs in the budget, and the overall effects on village development. The following section will provide a comprehensive explanation of the methodology for implementing the activity, detailing the stages of planning, execution, and evaluation of the community service program.

2. METHOD

This community service program was carried out in Jambo Papeun Village, located in the Meukek District of South Aceh Regency. The choice of Jambo Papeun Village as the site for these activities stemmed from initial observations indicating a notable lack of women's participation in village budget discussions. Consequently, a participatory approach was selected as the most effective method to ensure the program's sustainability. This approach emphasizes the importance of dialogue and critical awareness within the community, where individuals move beyond being mere recipients of information to actively engaging as subjects in every stage of addressing and solving issues (Freire, 1970).

In the context of this service, the application of participatory methods can be seen through the following stages :

a. *Preparation Stages/Needs Identification*

At this stage, an initial survey was conducted to gather data on women's participation in village budget-setting meetings in Jambo Village, Papeun, South Aceh Regency. The purpose of the survey was to assess the community conditions in the area and identify issues that require attention. Preliminary observations indicated a low turnout of women at village deliberation meetings, which are often held in the evenings. This data served as the foundation for initiating dialogue with community groups through in-depth interviews to explore the factors contributing to this situation.

b. *Implementation Stages/Participatory Planning*

After identifying key issues, the team developed a program of activities in collaboration with the community, with a particular focus on women's groups. Once the activity outline was finalized, the service team coordinated with the Gampong Jambo Papeun apparatus to establish the activity schedule and identify target participants. The community service program included delivering material through interactive methods, followed by a village deliberation simulation explicitly designed for the women of Gampong Jambo, Papeun. This aimed to showcase how women can actively participate in the budget planning process. The initiative sought to enhance awareness and foster a sense of ownership, as the ideas and proposals for these activities originated from the community itself.

c. *Stages of Assistance and Evaluation of Activities*

In a commitment to sustainability, the community service team offers mentoring to female representatives, both individually and in groups. This mentoring emphasizes the development of proposals, effective communication of aspirations, and a thorough understanding of village bureaucracy. Additionally, the team supplies straightforward teaching materials, such as posters, which succinctly outline the village budgeting process as a practical resource. To evaluate the impact of these activities, a quantitative assessment is planned for the following year, utilizing a survey method to monitor changes in women's participation levels continuously.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This community service activity was held on Thursday, April 17, 2025, at the Geuchik Jambo Papeun Office in Gampong Jambo Papeun, Meukek District, South Aceh Regency. Approximately 20 participants attended, including female and male staff from the Geuchik Office, women from the integrated health post (Posyandu), and several female representatives from the Gampong Jambo Papeun community. The community service activity began at 9:00 AM and ended at 12:00 PM WIB. The socialization was conducted by a lecturer from the Political Science Study Program at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Syiah Kuala University, directly addressing the participants. During the presentation, attendees received an overview of various aspects related to village funds, including their revenue sources, the process of preparing the village budget, and the management of these funds, among other pertinent information. In addition, participants gained insights into the roles of different community groups throughout the entire process, with a special focus on the marginalization of women within community culture.

The outreach activity highlighted the factors contributing to the low participation of women in village budget planning and oversight, including social stigma, lack of information, limited access, and minimal awareness of their own circumstances and environment. Following the presentation, the session included a deliberation simulation, enabling women to practice voicing their opinions and providing input on village planning.

The stages of this community service activity are summarized in the following table;

Table 1. Stages of Community Service Activities

No	Stages	Activity Description	Output
1	Preparation Stages/Needs Identification	Conducting an initial survey using data on women's participation in village budget determination meetings Conduct in-depth interviews with community groups to explore the factors causing low female participation.	Data on women's participation in village meetings and the contributing factors
2.	Implementation Stages/Participatory Planning	Designing activity programs with women's groups Coordinate with village officials to determine the schedule and target participants. Delivering material using interactive methods, followed by a village deliberation simulation specifically for women's groups	Community service program ideas and schemes are agreed upon with the community. Increased awareness and sense of ownership of the program among the community
3.	Stages of Assistance and Evaluation of Activities	Providing personal and group support for women representatives Provide posters for practical guidance. Conduct an evaluation survey in the following year.	The provision of mentoring and teaching materials that support the sustainability of women's participation Quantitative data on changes in the level of women's participation in village budgeting in the following year

In the initial phase, the community service team conducted a preliminary survey and in-depth interviews to assess women's participation in Gampong Jambo, Papeun. The results of this phase affirmed the initial observation that women's involvement in village planning and budgeting meetings remains notably low. The data collected not only highlighted minimal participation rates but also successfully identified contributing factors, such as the timing of deliberations, which often took place at night, along with women's limited awareness and sense of ownership concerning the decision-making process within the village. These insights provide a solid foundation for designing targeted interventions, ensuring that the forthcoming programs effectively address the identified issues.

After carefully diagnosing the issue, the community service team collaborated with the women's group from Gampong Jambo Papeun to design a program aimed at enhancing budget capacity and financial literacy. This phase was implemented using an interactive approach, which provided not only theoretical knowledge but also simulated village deliberations. The primary outcome of this stage was an increased sense of awareness and ownership among the women. Participants transitioned from being passive listeners to actively identifying their needs and expressing their own suggestions. Through simulations, participants acquire practical experience in articulating their aspirations in formal forums, a vital skill for effective engagement.

The final phase of the program is centered on sustainability. The community service team offers individualized and group mentoring sessions to equip women representatives with the skills necessary to advocate for their proposals. This phase culminates in the creation of mentoring materials, including educational posters designed as practical and easy-to-understand guides. These resources are intended to serve as ongoing references for women in the village, even after the core activities have concluded. To assess long-term impact, the community service team is also planning a quantitative survey for the following year. This evaluation intends to measure changes in women's participation levels in the village budgeting process, ensuring that the program has a sustainable and measurable impact.

Based on the stages of community service activities conducted in Gampong Jambo Papeun, South Aceh, it is evident that women's involvement in budget preparation and management at the village level still encounters various limitations, both in terms of formal representation and technical capacity. However, through an empowerment approach focused on gender mainstreaming, this initiative has successfully fostered a more inclusive discussion space among village officials, community leaders, and women's groups. These findings reaffirm that gender-responsive budgeting is closely linked to the socio-economic conditions of village communities. Furthermore, this community service initiative highlights how the underrepresentation of women in village planning and deliberation forums limits the range of available policy alternatives. In the context of Gampong Jambo Papeun, this issue is particularly evident in the predominance of physical development concerns over addressing women's specific needs, such as enhancing access to healthcare, providing skills training, and strengthening household economies.

The mentoring activities reinforced the argument made by Polzer and Seiwald (2021) that neglecting gender dynamics in budgetary decisions can lead to significant weaknesses in public administration and governance structures, ultimately resulting in less favorable social outcomes. Through participatory dialogue, this service facilitated the establishment of initial agreements aimed at enhancing the capacity of women's groups to comprehend the village budget cycle and strengthen their advocacy within deliberative forums. Consequently, this service not only emphasizes knowledge transfer but also acts as a critical first step toward fostering village governance that is more inclusive, equitable, and responsive to gender-specific needs. Overall, these findings indicate that the PKM program has effectively achieved its objectives. Here is the documentation of community service activities:



Delivering material



An evaluation survey from poster

4. CONCLUSION

Overall, the outreach program on the importance of women's participation in gender-inclusive village budgeting processes in Gampong Jambo Papeun provides significant multidimensional benefits. This activity directly empowers women, equipping them with a stronger voice to advocate for programs relevant to their specific needs. Furthermore, for the village government, this participation serves as a crucial instrument for generating fairer and more inclusive policies, as it is based on comprehensive input from all elements of society. Ultimately, these benefits ripple throughout the village community, creating more equitable and sustainable development for all residents of Gampong Jambo Papeun. This activity was conducted as part of an academic initiative aimed at promoting a balance of power and equal participation at the village level. Through a direct face-to-face approach to the Gampong Jambo Papeun community, this will likely be the first step in raising public awareness regarding the importance of a more gender-inclusive village budget.

Community service activities (PKM) aimed at promoting the importance of women's participation in village budgeting were successful. However, the implementation faced several shortcomings, including low attendance among female participants and time constraints. Therefore, all parties must be involved to encourage women's participation in public spaces. By integrating gender perspectives into budgeting processes, governments can enhance equality while ensuring

that development initiatives are inclusive and effective. The ongoing collaboration between policymakers, civil society, and various stakeholders remains essential to foster successful gender budgeting practices that promote sustainable development. However, this community service activity has another limitation because it only focuses on one village, Jambo Village, Papeun. To obtain a more comprehensive picture and serve as a broader reference base regarding women's active involvement in the village budgeting process, further observations are needed to determine sample locations for similar activities in other areas. This mapping is considered essential as a form of academic responsibility in raising awareness among village communities about the importance of equality and promoting social justice. This community service program recommends that village governments institutionalize gender-responsive budgeting and continuously build women's capacity in budget literacy and advocacy. Expanding similar initiatives to other villages is essential to strengthen inclusive governance and promote sustainable gender equality in rural development.

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