

INSIGHT

## Empowering Women through a Community-Driven Project



The improved transport facilities in the provinces of Indonesia provided better access to markets, schools, and hospitals.

Photo: Ariel Javellana/ADB

*A project in Indonesia opens livelihood opportunities for women and encourages their participation in community development.*

### Introduction

Jobs should be open to all. Challenging traditional divisions of labor is key to ensuring that women have equal access to empowerment opportunities.

This was demonstrated in the Urban Sanitation and Rural Infrastructure Support to PNPM Mandiri Project in Indonesia. The project hired women for construction jobs for basic rural infrastructures that in return will provide them with the sense of security, freedom from time poverty, and better access to markets, schools, and hospitals.

This ADB-funded effort covered 600 rural communities, and 1,439 poor urban neighborhoods in 34 cities from 2011 to 2016. This supports Indonesia's national program for community empowerment.

# Analysis

## Livelihood opportunities

In Katerban village, district of Purworejo in Central Java province, women are employed by a community implementing organization, where 40% of the elected members are female. These workers earn between 32,500 and 35,000 Indonesian rupiahs (about \$3.50 to \$4.00) per day by helping in the build of sanitation facilities. They work in groups and mostly lifted and carried materials from one spot to another. These jobs are better remunerated and less physically arduous than work in the rice fields. Workers only get approximately Rp20,000 (about \$2.20) a day from contract farm work.

By the end of the project, about 20% of employment opportunities were provided to women under the rural infrastructure component, and 12% under the urban sanitation component. Average income was Rp60,000 per day, but the women's pay was lower at about Rp45,000. More complicated construction jobs with more pay were given to men.

The women construction workers use their earnings to cover food and school expenses.

## Improve time poverty and women's sense of security

The project built sanitation and washing facilities in some 1,430 urban neighborhoods leading to valuable time savings. Female residents said they and their children now save more than 1 to 2 hours a day from not having to go back and forth to the river.

Building toilets closer to homes also provided women with a sense of security. They no longer need to be accompanied by the men to the river or fields, especially at night. Children were also able to go to the toilet by themselves, and their parents worried less about their safety.

The provision of water supply and sanitation, coupled with health and hygiene awareness training by the project's community facilitators, helped cut time spent collecting water by as much as 50% and reduced the incidence of waterborne diseases by 8%. These facilities have helped ease the domestic burden of women, who are largely responsible for water collection and caring of the sick. The time they save could be used for other productive activities. In Rejowinangun Utara village in Central Java's Magelang City, for example, women now have the time to pursue growing organic vegetables as an alternative livelihood.

## Better access to markets, schools, and hospitals

The rural roads and transport facilities built under the project gave residents in 600 villages easy access to nearby markets where they could sell their farm produce. The improved transport facilities reduced transport costs by as much as 50%. The project's impact report showed that visits to health clinics and hospitals increased, and pre-natal checkups went up by 15%. The improved facilities led to higher school attendance and a 9% decrease in dropout rates.

# Implications

## Empowering community with a special focus on women

The project used a community-driven development approach. It involved women in all project activities. Related advocacy and training programs institutionalized proper hygiene and health practices through the community implementing organization and community facilitators.

The participation of women in all consultation activities to improve access to sanitation facilities (the planning and decision making stages) ranged from 46% to 64%.

## Making women's voices heard in decision-making fora

Separate meetings for women were organized giving them the space and voice to decide how funds from block grants were to be spent and on which basic infrastructure. Women indicated that training activities increased their confidence and ability to express their views. They were also responsible for the overseeing of Operations and Maintenance (O&M) arrangements.

# Resources

Asian Development Bank. Urban Sanitation and Rural Infrastructure Support to PNPM Mandiri Project

ADB. Mainstreaming Gender in Urban Sanitation and Rural Infrastructure Projects



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