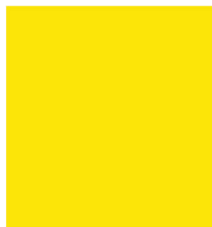



# EMPOWERED WOMEN'S FLAME OF HOPE IN NUSA TENGGARA

Indonesian Women in Leadership (I WIL)  
Project Journey in NTB and NTT  
2018-2023



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**Oxfam** in Indonesia has been working since 1957 in Indonesia in partnership with Ministry of Social Affairs to carry out poverty allevation programs through economic justice, gender justice, and fulfillment of rights in times of crisis and disaster. The content of this document does not reflect the opinion and values of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

## Executive letter from Oxfam in Indonesia's Country Director

**T**he Indonesian Women in Leadership (I WIL) project was a significant undertaking, a massive hard work of the project team, the partners on the ground: Konsorsium Timor Adil dan Setara (KTAS), Konsorsium ADARA, Kalyanamitra, and the people we work with. I truly believe that it has given a remarkable impact towards the lives of people, particularly 20,910 women, girls and even men in Eastern Indonesia. Since the beginning of the project, our mission to empower women and promote gender equality is at the heart of everything we do, and I am humbly grateful and proud of the progress and triumphs the team has made over the past five years. We hope this is a contribution that is meaningful for development work in the country to complement the work of the Government of Indonesia, particularly the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Through its programs and activities, I WIL project focused on three pillars,

the Women Economic Empowerment, Gender Based Violence, and Women in Leadership in 21 villages in two provinces in Indonesia: East Nusa Tenggara and West Nusa Tenggara. Under the Women Economic Empowerment pillar, our partners worked with local governments and the people we work with to provide more opportunities and platforms for women so they can participate more fully in their communities and contribute to their families' economic stability. In order to eliminate violence against women and girls, through the Gender Based Violence (GBV) pillar, I WIL champions and paralegals have worked with local communities to ensure that women and People with Disability (PWD) receive the help they need and the perpetrators of GBV are held accountable for their actions. And last but not least, to promote the role of women in decision making and women's representation in the society,

under the Women in Leadership pillar, I WIL team worked to enable spaces in communities where women's voices are heard, and their contributions are recognized.

With the communities' rejection at the beginning of the project and the COVID-19 pandemic that came along the way, the road was not always easy, as the team encountered several challenges and barriers throughout the project lifespan. However, perseverance and persistence were the eternal flames that ignited the project towards its success and achievements. The project eventually received full support from the communities and the local governments and has inspired the people involved in the project to continue the legacy that has been created by I WIL.

I am fully aware that the tremendous journey the I WIL team has been on for the past five years may not be able to be fully described in 70 pages, but I believe the stories of changes that are

poured into this book will immerse you and any reader in the challenges and accomplishments of the I WIL journey.

I would like to take this opportunity to also express my personal gratitude sincerely to our team and partners for their hard work, dedication, and commitment to this project. Without their efforts, this project would not have been possible. Oxfam is also grateful for the continuous support of the donor, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs, and the local governments who have strongly supported the project and made it possible, and we look forward to working with you to advance gender equality in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

Maria Lauranti

Country Director of Oxfam in Indonesia

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**ADARA:** Adil Damai dan Setara  
(Fair, Peace and Equal as in ADARA Consortium)

**ADD:** Alokasi Dana Desa (Village Budget Allocation)

**Admindak:** Administrasi Kependudukan  
(Civil Registration)

**APBDes:** Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Desa (Village Budget)

**ASEAN:** Association of Southeast Asian Nation

**BPD:** Badan Permusyawaratan Desa  
(Village Representative Council)

**BPJS:** Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Sosial (Health Care and Social Security Agency)

**BUMDes:** Badan Usaha Milik Desa  
(Village Owned Enterprise)

**Dekranasda:** Dewan Kerajinan Nasional Daerah (Local Craft Council)

**DFAT:** Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

**Dinsos:** Dinas Sosial (Social Office)

**Dinkopnakertrans:** Dinas Koperasi Tenaga Kerja dan Transmigrasi  
(Cooperation, Labor, and Transmigration Office)

**Dindikcapil:** Dinas Kependudukan dan Catatan Sipil (Civil Registry Service Office)

**DP3AP2KB:** Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan, Perlindungan Anak dan Pengendalian Penduduk dan Keluarga Berencana (Women's Empowerment, Child Protection and Population Control and Family Planning Office)

**FGD:** Focus Group Discussion

**HWDI:** Himpunan Wanita Disabilitas Indonesia (Indonesian Association of Women with Disabilities)

**IJM:** Ingkar Janji Menikah (Broken Marriage Vow)

**INFID:** International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development

**IPG:** Indeks Pemberdayaan Gender  
(Gender Development Index)

**IPM:** Indeks Pembangunan Manusia  
(Human Development Index)

**Kadus:** Kepala Dusun (Sub-village Chief)

**KBG:** Kekerasan Berbasis Gender  
(Gender-Based Violence)

**KPKK:** Kelompok Perempuan Kritis dan Kreatif (Critical and Creative Womens Group)

**KTP:** Kartu Tanda Penduduk (Identity Card)

**LBH:** Lembaga Bantuan Hukum (Legal Aid)

**Musrenbangdes:** Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan Desa (Village Development Plan Meeting)

**Musdes:** Musyawarah Desa (Village Meeting)

**Musdus:** Musyawarah Dusun (Sub-village Meeting)

**NTB:** Nusa Tenggara Barat (West Nusa Tenggara)

**NTT:** Nusa Tenggara Timur (East Nusa Tenggara)

**PAUD:** Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (Early Childhood Education)

**P2TP2A:** Pusat Pelayanan Terpadu Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak (Integrated Service Center for Women Empowerment and Child Protection)

**Pemdes:** Pemerintah Desa (Village Government)

**Pemkab:** Pemerintah Kabupaten (District Government)

**Perda PPA:** Peraturan Daerah Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak (District Regulation on Women and Children Protection)

**Perdes PPA:** Peraturan Desa Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak (Village Regulation on Women and Children Protection)

**PKK:** Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (Family Welfare Empowerment)

**PPA:** Pusat Pengembangan Anak (Child Development Center)

**Renstra:** Rencana Strategis (Strategic Plan)

**PRJMDes:** Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Desa (Village Medium-Term Development Plan)

**RKPDes:** Rencana Kerja Pembangunan Desa (Village Development Workplan)

**RT:** Rukun Tetangga (Neighborhood)

**RW:** Rukun Warga (Hamlet)

**SDGs:** Sustainable Development Goals

**SD:** Sekolah Dasar (Elementary School)

**SK:** Surat Keputusan (Decree)

**SOP:** Standar Operation Procedure

**TAS:** Timor Adil dan Setara (Fair and Equal Timor as in TAS Consortium)

**UMKM:** Usaha Mikro Kecil dan Menengah (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise)

**UPTD PPA:** Unit Pelaksana Teknis Daerah Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak (Regional Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children)

**YABIKU NTT:** Yayasan Amnaut Bife “Kuan” Nusa Tenggara Timur

# WHEN I WIL BREAKS THROUGH DIVIDER AND TRANSCENDS LIMITATIONS

Looking at the index related to gender equality in Indonesia, we can't smile yet. The Global Gender Gap Index 2022 ranks Indonesia 92nd out of 146 countries with a score of 0.697, which means 69.7 per cent has been achieved. Indonesia is still below the Philippines, Laos, Singapore, Timor Leste, Thailand and Vietnam. Statistics Indonesia (BPS) in 2021 still places 25 out of 33 provinces with low and medium categories of the Gender Development Index (IPG). That is why changing behaviour on the issue of women's empowerment is challenging because it is often intertwined with the entanglement of deep-rooted customs and paradigms. Finally, various women's empowerment programmes are more superficial and partial.

It is in this context that the Indonesian Women in Leadership (I WIL) project is present. This project of Oxfam in Indonesia is carried out in two provinces, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) and West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), which are included in the middle and low-middle IPG categories. The duration of this project spanning between 2018-2023 and aim to strengthen the leadership of women with socio-economic vulnerability with the support of the

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

Areas in NTT include six villages in Kupang Regency (Oelomin, Tunfeu, Niukbaun, Nekbaun, Oebelo and Oesena); four villages in South Central Timor Regency (Ajaobaki, Biloto, Oekam, Oelet); and two villages in North Central Timor Regency (Kuanek, Maubesi). While in NTB it includes three villages in East Lombok Regency (Jurit Baru, Pringgasela Selatan, Beririjarak) and six villages in Central Lombok Regency (Sukarara, Batu Tulis, Nyerot, Pemepek, Pagutan, Ubung).

Oxfam and its partners, namely the Konsorsium Timur Adil dan Setara-Timor Adil and Setara Consortium (KTAS) for NTT and the Konsorsium Adil Damai dan Setara-Adil Damai and Setara Consortium (ADARA) for NTB, designed this project with a comprehensive approach through three pillars that are worked on simultaneously to achieve behaviour change targets as well as real impact in the region. These pillars are Gender-Based Violence Elimination, Women Economic Empowerment, and Women Leadership.

Consist of local NGOs, these two consortium are spearheading the project implementation. While the third partner, Kalyanamitra Foundation, plays role in training village governments to be able to monitor, record and report village SDGs achievements and promote good practices of I WIL project in national and ASEAN forums.

## Three pillars lead to Value-added

Targeting behaviour change must begin with knowledge change and then attitude change. This is reflected in each pillar's targets. The Gender-Based Violence Elimination pillar targets women, men and community networks to take joint action to change social norms that trigger gender-based violence. The pillar of Women Economic Empowerment wants to realise empowered women and young girls through economic empowerment activities and inclusive businesses. Meanwhile, the Women Leadership pillar targets more women and girls to have greater access and control over social leadership, politics and economic resources.

I WIL has three added values. First, the three pillars comprehensive approach that makes I WIL different compared to similar programs, because it is proven that the

issues of violence against women elimination, women empowerment in the economy and women leadership are interrelated and influence each other.

Second, the community-based service, namely paralegals and women economic empowerment groups, who addressing problem and bridging communities to access formal institutions and services. Third, the active involvement of key local actors such as village governments and traditional or religious leaders who are very strategic in strengthening policies and practices.

## Engaging leaders

The three added values are manifested in the project's achievements over its five-year journey. In the Gender-Based Violence Elimination pillar, community-based justice services in the project area have improved, among others, by establishing an effective community-based reporting mechanism through paralegals. These paralegals, who are not only ordinary citizens but also traditional and government leaders, have increased community awareness and trust, as seen in the number of case reports that have increased by 25 per cent in the last 2 years of the project. There are currently 147 paralegals and more than 130 traditional and religious leaders who actively support Gender-Based Violence elimination reduction.

This strategy of engaging local leaders has led to successful policy advocacy. For example, the Village Regulation on the Protection of Women and Children (Perdes PPA) is integrated with customary law to legalize paralegals by issuing decree in 19 out of 21 villages in the project area. This means there have been changes in community values, practices, and systems to prevent, treat and reduce Gender-Based Violence elimination cases.

On the other hand, the strengthening of the position of women involved in I WIL is accompanied by changes in the behaviour of husbands who are willing to do domestic work. This male involvement is also unique to I WIL, breaking the stigma that gender-based programmes only involve women. The result is a behavioural change that is not just individual but communal and systemic.

## Unexpected impacts

Strengthening the bargaining position of women involved in I WIL is an achievement of the Women Economic Empowerment pillar. They have a more substantial role in the family, such as managing financial planning. More than that, these women have gone far beyond anyone's imagination. None of these village women have ever dreamed of their products would be part of the world-class World Super Bike event at the Mandalika Circuit, or even marketed to Cambodia.

Various parties also welcomed the initiative of these innovative women. Inclusive business pilot villages emerged. Village to provincial governments and the private sector are committed to supporting their development and opening marketing channels.

The various training and mentoring received by the women's groups involved in I WIL have impacted their skills and confidence in dealing with these parties. At least 21 women's groups in NTT & NTB have been trained and assisted in accessing capital, market and legal opportunities.

The women could organise meetings and prepare proposals to be submitted in village meetings. The number of women participating in formal meetings and the initiative to submit proposals at Dusun meetings, village meetings, and other forums has increased rapidly.

Of course, the results of these initiatives must be seen after a period of time, but the development is reasonably good. For example, 3 villages in NTT built new clean water access that can reduce the burden of time, energy, and costs incurred by women.

In addition to what was designed at the beginning of the project, I WIL also brought changes in unexpected areas, namely disability. The challenges encountered in the field brought ideas and an inclusive spirit to reach vulnerable disability groups. It started with establishing a particular complaint

post for people with disabilities and training paralegals with disabilities. Efforts to fulfil population administration rights were made in year 5, after working with HWDI (Indonesian Association of Women with Disabilities) NTB to record the number of people with disabilities in 9 villages in NTB. The ADARA consortium then collaborated with the Disdukcapil (Population and Civil Registration Agency) of Lotim and Loteng to fulfil this right.

## SDGs for villages

There are 5 of the 21 I WIL villages were used as examples of good practices in the achievement of Village SDGs written in a report entitled “Village SDGs Good Practices, Study of Gender Equality, Protection and Empowerment of Women in 10 Villages”, compiled by Kalyanamitra and INFID. This book was submitted to the Ministry of Villages and Ministry for National Development Planning (Bappenas) in 2022. The five villages that serve as examples of good practice are Batutulis, South Pringgasela, Ajaobaki, Kuanek and Oesena.

“The consortium is very helpful in delivering the pillars of the SDGs. The ADARA Consortium can maximise our role in achieving these pillars. Whether it is for poverty alleviation or women empowerment,” said Sukarara Village Secretary Zainal Rahman.

“SDGs achievements, we focus here on points 1,5,8. Poverty, it’s because of mindset. What we socialise with the consortium is that there are economic improvement efforts that residents, namely poultry farming, can do. As an average result, it can be used for school fees and college tuition. So it is already working as our SDGs on poverty,” said Muhsin, Head of Batutulis Village.

According to Lilis, Chief of Kalyanamitra, achievements in points 1, 5 and 8 of the SDGs contribute to other points. And what has been achieved by I WIL villages has a significant impact on reporting at the national level or needs to stand alone.

“In 2022, for example, we were involved in the ASEAN People Forum in Cambodia, which the ADARA and TAS also attended. The sharing process occurred, related to the process in I WIL, which turned out to be in line or could be learnt by other countries. So what happens locally can have a regional impact,” he said.

I WIL has contributed to fundamental changes in women’s rights equality even though it has only been implemented in 21 villages. The winds of change have begun to blow. They will slowly away the old face of NTB and NTT, dulled by high levels of violence and other injustices against women, into the luminous face of empowered women who fight equally and confidently alongside men. Fighting for a more dignified Indonesia.



# PILLAR I

# EFFORTS TO ERADICATE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Efforts to eliminate gender-based violence are the first pillar of the I WIL programme. This pillar encourages women, men, and community networks to take joint action to change social norms that trigger gender-based violence that mainly affects women and children. The involvement of various parties is a very strategic step because gender-based violence is a complex issue. The patriarchal culture rooted in society is the biggest challenge. Society considers women as inferior and therefore deserve to be beaten and abused. Women are also considered to have the duty to look after children and complete housework, so they don't get enough space to express themselves outside. This makes women economically

dependent and further makes them internalise society's view that they are incompetent and powerless. Therefore, gender-based violence cannot be solved by women alone. The following three articles describe how this multi-stakeholder engagement occurred in West Nusa Tenggara and East Nusa Tenggara. This includes the formation of paralegals, who have legal skills but are not professional lawyers and, with their legal skills, can help the community. Other efforts include forming Laki-Laki Pendukung Kesetaraan Gender aka Gender Equality Male Supporters and involving the community, religious and traditional leaders in handling and reducing cases of gender-based violence.

# Together Stepping the Non-Violence against Women Path

Facts are stubborn, statistics are more pliable, so says legendary writer Mark Twain. Visible numbers do not necessarily reflect reality. Such was the initial situation when the ADARA Consortium paved the way for Gender-Based Violence Elimination pillar implementation in NTB. The data on violence against women cases in nine villages where the I WIL project is located is very low, almost zero.

“The number was low because many people cover up cases that occur, considered a disgrace. If someone reports it, they will be ostracized because they are considered ignorant of tradition and religion or bypassing the village government,” said Ardian Pebriyanto Adi, Gender-Based Violence Eradication Specialist of ADARA Consortium.

He continued, after being traced by the consortium team, many cases of violence against women were revealed that had been going on for a long time. However, few residents consider it as problem because they are used to witnessing, experiencing, or even doing it.



Ardian Pebriyanto,  
GBV Eradication  
Specialist  
ADARA Consortium.  
(Gama/Oxfam  
in Indonesia)

“That where the fatality is, when people no longer consider it as problem, even though there has been much violence against women and children for a long time, just like daily life,” said Muhammad Juaini, Coordinator of ADARA Consortium.

Indrawati, activist of Critical and Creative Women Group (KPKK) in Jurit Baru Village, Pringgasea Sub-district, East Lombok District, confirmed this. Previously, she thought that the unfair situations experienced by

women were common place because that's what she saw and experienced.

"What we thought was normal turned out to be an even worse situation for women," she said.

Official data at the NTB Province Office of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection and Population Control and Family Planning (DP3AP2KB) recorded 959 cases of violence against women and children throughout 2021, up from 845 cases in 2022. When referring to the observations and assessments of the ADARA Consortium, that raising number is still far below the actual number.

The understanding and application of old tradition are often considered one of the causes of this complicated and deep-rooted problem. One of the issues highlighted in NTB is the practice of *Merariq*, a marriage tradition by "stealing" a woman and bringing her to a man's place. In *Merariq*, no matter how old the woman is, even if she is a very young girl, she has to be married by custom. That is why there are child marriages in the region almost every month.

"The traditional marriage system in Lombok is stolen or rushed. It becomes a disgrace for woman and her family when a man takes her away but then returns her unmarried. It is considered a violation of tradition," said Muhammad Yusuf, Chairman of the Sukarara Village Customary

Institution, Jonggat Sub-district, Central Lombok District.

The impact of this marriage system, especially when children are involved, is widespread due to physical and psychological unpreparedness, including high rate of divorce and violence against women, lack of women access to health services and other government aid.

"So even though the tradition is supported and upheld, it clashes with state law. They are not old enough to make legal individual ID card, family ID, and marriage certificate, which means they cannot participate in BPJS (Health Care and Social Security Agency)," continued Yusuf, who also Chief of Dasan Baru Sub-village.

Yusuf's position is unique, representing both tradition body and village government. After being involved in the I WIL process, he intensely campaigned for the principles of gender equality and the protection of women and even became a paralegal. This effort to embrace figures like Yusuf makes the implementation process in the Gender-Based Violence Elimination pillar begin to reverse direction.

## The turning point

During the first two years of the socialization process, the consortium team encountered many challenges,

and one of the hardest was with traditional leaders. Instead of continuing to fight, the team changed its strategy by making friends with community leaders, including village government officials.

“Simply this burden was because both parties don’t have the same understanding. So we slowly talk with the leaders. When the mutual understanding was finally achieved, they were become the most active campaigners,” Juaini added.

The positive impact began to be seen in the project’s third year. Capacity building through a series of training, discussions and intensive communication resulted in a change in understanding of the situation of women. The new understanding of communities involved in I WIL was transmitted through recitation, community meetings and traditional events.

“In the past, women in this village would never allow to equally sit in formal meeting and express our thought and idea. But now we can tell other women that it’s okay for us to say no if we don’t want to, of course in manner. So, women here now dare to say no if they get harsh words. If someone commits violence, there is no tolerance. They will immediately report to us,” said Baiq Anggita Silvia, a paralegal from Pagutan Village, Batukliang Sub-district, Central Lombok District.



Baiq Anggita Silvia, paralegal of Pagutan Village. (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)

After attending various training, the women involved in the I WIL activities have genuinely become the campaign’s driving force to change knowledge, attitudes and even behaviour. These women become agents of change in their own way.

“I often get stories from other housewives about how tired they are. Some even have to go to the rice fields and in the same time has to take care of the house. Meanwhile, their husbands are unemployed but don’t want to help,” said Indrawati.

Indrawati and her husband chose the campaign method by showing roles sharing of household works without saying much. Indrawati’s husband, when at home, does not hesitate to

wash and dry clothes, to sweep the yard. This simple thing effectively changed the perspective of other married couples who saw them.

The involvement of men in I WIL's Gender-Based Violence elimination pillar is the key to opening a space for awareness about equality. Susi Herawati, Project Manager of I WIL Project, said that men's involvement as a supporting system does not exist in other programmes at Oxfam in Indonesia.

"By involving and changing the mindset of men, women have more time to socialize with other women and also get opportunity to involve in village activities. Women become more confident in empowerment activities," she said.

Zulfikar, an elementary school teacher and village head in Sukarara village, confirmed his changes after participating in Gender Equality Male Supporters programme. He began to share roles with his wife equally and tried to spread this understanding through his behaviour at work and home.

## Treatment and recovery

After passing the understanding stage, the consortium team began the handling stage. It takes people trusted by residents who can also handle reports of violence systematically according to standards.



Zulfikar,  
Gender  
Equality  
Male  
Supporters  
of Sukarara  
Village.  
(Gama/  
Oxfam in  
Indonesia)

"Then the spearhead is village paralegal. Women, community leaders and gender equality male supporters are trained to become paralegals. It starts from receiving complaints to travelling around to find incidents of violence, as preventing action. They also have a complaint post," Juaini explained.

Village paralegals are an outstanding achievement in the Gender-Based Violence elimination pillar. By the end of 2022, there are 147 paralegals throughout the I WIL areas. The impact they have brought is massive, from changing mindsets and increasing the courage of residents to report acts of violence to the emergence of a level of trust in the village government.

"Paralegals here work in the village office. There is a signpost in front. We provide direct access to the community, including mediation. Thanks to I WIL, we already have a SOP to solve problems of violence against women. We have solved many

Muhsin,  
Head of  
Batutulis  
Village.  
(Gama/  
Oxfam in  
Indonesia)



problems together with consortium and paralegals,” said Muhsin, Head of Batutulis Village, Jonggat Sub-district, Central Lombok District.

Anggita also recognised that in her village chief always sends staff to come whenever there is a case mediation. Sometimes the village chief himself come and help with the settlement. The village government issued a Village Head Decree as legal reference for paralegals work. All villages in the I WIL areas in NTB have a such as decree to ensure the legality of paralegal work and a baseline for sustainability, including those related to operational budgets.

The long journey of the Gender-Based Violence Elimination pillar in NTB also culminated in the alignment of state law with tradition. A significant achievement considering that it is the customary factor that has been considered to shackle awareness about equality.

“We have issued village regulations that refer to the Marriage Law. Even in the current tradition, child marriage is one of the offences of *Salak Waye*. It was decided in the last *Sangkep* or Sasak Grand Assembly in Central Lombok,” Yusuf said.

As for the recovery phase, the consortium encourages the community to refer to the Regional Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children (UPTD PPA) in East Lombok and Central Lombok. This UPTD PPA will help connect with Social Services to get various recovery services.

## Space for disabilities

During the training, the consortium team realized that many fundamental problems are at the root of violence against women with disabilities. Together with Indonesian Association of Women with Disabilities (HWDI) NTB, village government, and Population and Civil Registration Office of East Lombok and Central Lombok, they

Wildan,  
Secretary of  
Jurit Baru  
Village.  
(Gama/  
Oxfam in  
Indonesia)



began to collect data on disabilities in the nine project villages, which led to paralegal training and efforts to facilitate civil registration rights.

Nur Baeni, a paralegal with a disability and member of HWDI NTB, said that becoming a paralegal was her life calling. Previously, when she learnt of her friends with disabilities experiencing violence, Nur was confused about what to do, including where to report it.

"I am grateful to be a paralegal, and now this is my path. I am fully committed. Of course there are obstacles. But I believe there is a way," she said.

Indeed, there was much gratitude when I WIL stepped on the final road of the project, especially on the Gender-Based Violence elimination pillar, which felt very heavy at the beginning of the journey. A glow of excitement mingled with hope floats through the air of the nine villages as they look to an independent future. The villagers' sighs of relief are represented in the words of Wildan, the Village Secretary of Jurit Baru.

**"Life is truly beautiful when we respect women."**

# Taking Apart Gender-Based Violence by Involving the Community

The presence of paralegals in Maubesi Village, Central Insana Sub-district, North Central Timor District, East Nusa Tenggara Province has reduced cases of gender-based violence in the village for at least the last three years. In addition, victims of gender-based violence, mostly women, now have a place to complain.

What happened in Maubesi Village differs from the trend of violent cases in the NTT region. Based on data from the Regional Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children of NTT Province, the number of reported violence cases against women and children in 2022 reached 287 cases, with 152 cases affecting adult women and 135 cases occurring in minors. This number increased compared to the previous year.

Venidora Naisaban, aka Mama Veni, one of the paralegals in Maubesi Village, said that when she attended training to become a paralegal in 2018, there were cases of violence against women in her village that were high. With the presence of paralegals like herself and several other residents, the number of cases began to decrease. "If you mention a paralegal, they [the perpetrators] are afraid. The victim reports, we immediately arrest the perpetrator," she said.

The paralegal training was part of the I WIL programme conducted by Oxfam in Indonesia in collaboration with the *Timor Adil and Setara* (TAS) Consortium. TAS Consortium Coordinator Ansy Damaris said that before the I WIL programme began in NTT, many women were unaware they had become victims of gender-based violence. As a result, many victims remained silent. On the other hand, there is a culture that form a mindset that women must maintain the family's good name. As a consequence, when there is a case of sexual violence in the family committed by an adult male against a child, for example, it is not reported because it is considered a disgrace to the family. "Children have been victimised, wives too, but they are powerless to speak out about it," she said.

She said reducing the number of gender-based violence cases is not an easy task. However, the I WIL programme has opened up people's horizons. Now they dare to talk about the violence they experience. "It is proven that they report their cases to paralegals or the Women and Child Protection (PPA) Task Force at the village level," she said.

Maubesi Village Chief Vincencius Fomeni agrees. In the past, violence against women and children in his village was quite common. Within the family, many



Venidora  
Naisaban and  
Vincensius  
Sobe. (Gama/  
Oxfam in  
Indonesia)

wives were forced to work beyond their capacities. Women were also seen as having to focus on caring for the home, making it challenging to develop their potential. After the I WIL programme, there have been changes.

## Unravelling customs, engaging communities

What the Maubesi Village Chief expressed illustrates the complexity of problems related to gender-based violence. In addition to the lack of protection for women victims, the violence experienced cannot be separated from the deep-rooted societal views about women's inferior position, powerlessness, and incompetence to do anything other than domestic work. Therefore, efforts to eliminate gender-based violence cannot be made with just one approach.

In the I WIL programme, the effort is carried out in stages by targeting three levels of change: individual, community and system or policy. Technically, this is done by encouraging women, men and community networks to take joint action

to change social norms that trigger gender-based violence.

The formation of a community-based paralegal team is one part of this effort. In Maubesi Village, like many other villages in NTT, protection services for victims of gender-based violence are still minimal. Even if they exist, not all victims can access such services. Through establishing paralegal teams in the villages that are the location of the I WIL programme, women's access to complaints and assistance services has become more open.

Mama Veni said that in her village, eight paralegals consisting of four women and four men. Their main activity is to assist victims of violence, especially women and children. So far, the most common cases she has faced as a paralegal are domestic violence, sexual violence, and broken marriage vows.

A paralegal team to handle cases of gender-based violence was also formed in Ajaobaki Village, North Mollo Sub-District, South Central Timor District, NTT. Margarita Seko, aka Mama Gita, is one of the paralegals in Ajaobaki

Margarita Seko, paralegal of Ajaobaki Village. (Gama/ Oxfam in Indonesia)



Village. In assisting victims, Mama Gita will usually go to the victim and her family for counselling. If it turns out that the case cannot be resolved, the case will be referred to the Sanggar Suara Perempuan Foundation office. However, if the case can be resolved in the village, it will be pursued by involving village officials and traditional and religious

leaders. Through these efforts, violence against women and children in Ajaobaki Village is no longer as prominent as before.

## Male involvement

Violence against women and children is not just a women's issue but an issue for everyone. For this reason, men need to be involved in efforts to eliminate violence against women. In the I WIL programme, this is done, among others, by inviting men to become paralegals and initiating the formation of Gender Equality Male Supporters.

Ishak Boenbalan is one of the men who became a paralegal to handle cases of gender-based violence in his village, Oelomin Village, Nekamese District, Kupang District, NTT. He admits that he is interested in becoming a paralegal because he feels a responsibility to ensure that cases of violence against women and children do not accumulate. As a paralegal, he has assisted many victims of violence in his village. He communicates closely with the village and sub-district governments, the police, and the church.



Marnix Bani, Gender Equality Male Supporters Coordinator of Desena Village shares housework with his wife. (Gama/ Oxfam in Indonesia)



Providing support for sexual violence victim. (Kyo/Oxfam in Indonesia)

Vincencius Sobe, security staff at a high school, has a similar experience. This Maubesi villager is one of the men who act as a paralegal for cases of violence against women in his village. In addition, he is also part of the Gender Equality Male Supporters facilitated by the Yabiku Foundation. As a Gender Equality Male Supporters participant, he is tasked with socialising gender equality in his village through *Posyandu* [community health center] activities, church and village meetings. He invites residents to understand the division of roles in the family. That work at home is not only the wife's job. Husbands can also do housework such as washing dishes, drawing water, cooking, and taking children to the *Posyandu* and school.

The Male Gender Equality Supporters programme was also held in Oesena Village, Amarasi District, Kupang District. Marnix Bani, Gender Equality Male Supporters Coordinator in Oesena Village, said they now have 20 members. Since the Gender Equality Male Supporters was established, cases of violence against women are

not as frequent as before. Regular socialisation with men has also made women and men more equal.

## Policy supports

The I WIL programme has also encouraged the involvement of leaders at the local level. Village officials, traditional leaders, and religious leaders support efforts to eliminate gender-based violence. Many traditional leaders are now actively promoting gender equality. Meanwhile, local leaders in many villages, for example, have made policies to support eliminating gender-based violence.

Ajaobaki Village already has a *Perdes* (*Peraturan Desa*-Village Regulations) for handling violence against women and children. The regulation includes sanctions for perpetrators of violence. "The presence of the regulation is beneficial so that for problems, we can work together with the village head, RT, RW, *Dusun* with traditional and religious leaders," said Mama Gita.

In Maubesi Village, the village government also provides budget

support. "There was a case in a neighbouring Dusun. We are paralegals, and all of us are in the same Dusun. We wanted to go there, using motorbikes, we needed petrol. The money we get (from the village government) is for petrol to make it easier for us to get to the location or scene of the incident," said Mama Veni.

The budget support from the village has been included in Maubesi Village's budget (Anggaran Dana Desa/ADD). Therefore, although the I WIL programme has finished, the work of the paralegal team and Gender Equality Male Supporters can continue.

In addition, to support from the village, the paralegal team also received support from the church and the sub-district government. "The sub-district head gave us a certificate of appreciation for us paralegals and Gender Equality Male Supporters. At the 17 August ceremony, he called us one by one to receive the certificate of appreciation from the sub-district," said Vincencius Sobe.

Ansy from the TAS Consortium said they were trying to equip paralegals with the necessary equipment. At the village level, the village must issue a paralegal decree or task force decree. They also need to receive a budget allocation from the village. In addition, they also need to have identity cards, uniforms, and a post. So far, paralegals in several villages covered by the I WIL programme have received these.

The head of Tunfeu Village, Nekamese Sub-district, Kupang District, Martinus Leonard Lely, said he was grateful to

the I WIL programme for motivating the village government and paralegal team. The existence of the paralegal team in Tunfeu Village has been formalised through a decree, as well as receiving a budget allocation from the village so that they can continue to work optimally. As for efforts to eliminate violence against women, Tunfeu Village now has several village regulations (Peraturan Desa/Perdes), including violence against women; pregnancy outside of marriage; 9-year compulsory education; child marriage; and home delivery.

"Because when childbirth occurs at home, the mortality rate of mothers and children increases. So we, the village government, made a *Perdes* on home deliveries and budgeted for transport costs to the hospital or health centre," he explains.



Martinus  
Leonard Lely.  
(Gama/Oxfam  
in Indonesia)

# Taking a Role in Eliminating Violence against Women Together

Nur Baeni's anxiety continues to peak into despair whenever she finds a friend in her disability group experiencing violence. She knew and believed that the victims of violence needed more than just a friend to confide in. However, Nur did not know how to report and resolve the issue.

As a member of the HWDI (Indonesian Association of Women with Disabilities) of West Nusa Tenggara Province, her assistance has been more psychological because she has access to women with disabilities who are victims of violence. However, such assistance is not enough to help victims.

Luckily, her involvement in HWDI eventually led her to become a paralegal. In the middle of the I WIL project, the ADARA consortium decided to collaborate with HWDI NTB to handle cases of gender-based violence in their project area jointly.

"My wish came true. Being a paralegal is my calling. So I am very grateful to be involved as a paralegal because of this project," she said.

Previously she could only be a friend to victims, including her close neighbours. Like the majority of women victims of violence, especially those with disabilities, justice is something utopian for them.

She added that being a paralegal is more than just the flow and mechanism of formal reporting. Nur also learnt how to interact with victims of violence with different types of disabilities. Everything she learned during the training made her confident in her calling as a paralegal.

She also realises that there are many challenges ahead, as she has gone through before. Nur recounted a time when she had to accompany a victim of violence from Central Lombok while she was from West Lombok. There was no vehicle that she could use.

Nur Baeni.  
(Gama/Oxfam  
in Indonesia)



There was also no operational fund. Not giving up, Nur then asked for help from her friend, who would take her to the victim's location.

"The important thing is commitment and willingness. I am sure there is a way. Women with disabilities who are victims of violence need us. However, we must remember that they are strong. They are not weak," she emphasised.

## The movement of indigenous leaders

In addition to the militancy of the women involved in I WIL, the influence of traditional leaders who supported I WIL's mission was recognised by the ADARA Consortium team as changing the situation from one of deadlock to one of smooth running. One of these figures is Muhammad Yusuf. The beginning of

Yusuf's awareness cannot be separated from his position as Chief of *Dusun* Dasan Baru, Sukarara Village, Jonggat District, Central Lombok District.

As a village government official, he found it very difficult to fulfil the administrative rights of his citizens. The village population data became invalid, which made it challenging to distribute government assistance, which must be based on a formal legal identity. One of the causes that often occurs is the high rate of child marriage.

So not only are they vulnerable to violence, but women who undergo child marriage also can not access government services and assistance because they are not old enough to obtain an identity. This situation made Yusuf immediately welcome the arrival of the consortium team through I WIL in his village, and he was even willing to become a paralegal.



Muhammad  
Yusuf,  
Chairman  
of Sukarara  
Village  
Costumary  
Institution.  
(Gama/Oxfam  
in Indonesia)

Chairman of the Village Customary Institution significantly brought about change. Of course, the decision to get involved in I WIL made him encounter many challenges and threats because of the strong customs. However, he finally managed to pave the way for the harmony of customary law and state law with the decision of the *Sangkep* forum or the Sasak Grand Assembly stating that child marriage violates custom.

## Never back down despite insecurities

Women's militancy in eliminating violence can also be seen in the actions of many women in East Nusa Tenggara Province. One of them is Venidora Naisaban aka Mama Veni. Mama Veni, who never studied law formally, has now become one of the important figures in efforts to assist victims of violence in her village. Despite her initial insecurity, she never stopped learning and practising her knowledge as a paralegal.

The resident of Maubesi Village, Central Insana Sub-district, North Central Timor District, has assisted many women in her village who are victims of violence. "My education is only junior high school. But I don't feel hopeless or inferior, I keep going forward to work in my duties as a paralegal to help people who are victims of violence. Especially women and children in our village," said the grandmother of one.

She said that when she first received training to become a paralegal under I WIL programme in 2018, violence against women in her village was high. With the



Venidora  
Naisaban.  
(Gama/Oxfam  
in Indonesia)

presence of paralegals like herself and several other residents, the number of cases decreased.

In her village, Mama Veni is one of eight paralegals. They assist victims of violence, such as KDRT (*Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga*-Domestic Violence), IJM (*Ingkar Janji Menikah*-broken promises of Marriage), and sexual violence.

In addition to assisting victims of gender-based violence, Mama Veni also socialises the existence of paralegals to residents at the neighbourhood (RT), Dusun and school levels. During the socialisation, she asked women not to be afraid to report if they become or see a case of violence. The emphasis on women not being afraid is essential because most perpetrators of gender-based violence are people closest to the

victim, whether the victim's husband, family, or neighbours.

"We emphasise to women, don't be afraid when there is a case don't be silent. You have to disclose it. If we are silent, the perpetrators will continue to commit violence at any time. But if we reveal it, they will also realise not to commit violence against women," she explained.

## Driven by a sense of responsibility

The passion for eradicating violence against children and women also comes from Ishak Boenbalan. As a man, the many unaddressed cases of violence against children and women in his village moved him. He felt responsible for resolving these cases. Therefore, as

soon as there was training to become a paralegal, he joined. "If the relevant parties don't handle it, don't join paralegals to look at cases like this; the cases will pile up. It will never be finished," said the resident of Oelomin Village, Nekamese Sub-district, Kupang District, NTT.

Ishak joined as a paralegal in 2018. The first case he handled was a victim of pregnancy outside of marriage whom the perpetrator left behind. Ishak dared to assist the victim even though he had no experience. After hearing the survivor's story, he reported the case to the local police station. Based on Ishak's report, the perpetrator was summoned by the police. The perpetrator wanted to take responsibility there, so he was released. However, not long after, the perpetrator broke his promise again and refused to marry the survivor. Isaac reported the case again. "I happened to be at the sub-district office. The head of the sub-district said, okay, I will assist you," he said.

The sub-district eventually took over the case. They tried to bring together the survivor and perpetrator by issuing a summons. However, the perpetrator did not want to come and even planned to marry someone else. Seeing the situation, Ishak sent a letter to the village government, sub-district, church and the Kupang Dukcapil (*Dinas Kependudukan dan Catatan Sipil*- District Population and Civil Registration Office). He and the Nekamese sub-district head also attended the perpetrator's marriage blessing at the church. As a result, he was deemed



Ishak  
Boenbalan.  
(Gama/Oxfam  
in Indonesia)

to have disrupted the blessing and was even reported to Kupang Police by the perpetrator's family. After Ishak explained what had happened, the police supported him. Support also came from the Dukcapil Office by not issuing a marriage record. "After that, we processed it with the sub-district head. We told the family that we were ready to report to the police. Finally, the family and the perpetrator were present, and the problem was resolved in a family manner at the sub-district office," he added.

After that first case, as a paralegal, Ishak handled various other cases, ranging from domestic violence to broken marriage vows. According to him, before the paralegal team arrived, the rate of violence against children and women in his village was very high. The presence of the paralegal team has had a positive impact not only on Tunfeu Village but also on neighbouring villages. Ishak and the other paralegal team members diligently socialise through meetings and celebrations. "We come and tell them that violence against women and children is now being addressed. Be careful if we do things that trigger violence," he said.

Ishak revealed that his courage to assist cases could not be separated from the training he attended in the I WIL programme. As an economics graduate, he initially knew nothing about the law. However, as a paralegal, he now understands the law better and can use it to handle violent cases. "Although we did not handle 100 per cent of the cases well. But we feel there is a change in us

when we assist a case. That's what we feel," he said.

## Domestic work isn't only the wife's job

Another story comes from Lewi Yulianus Ablelo aka Uncle or Om Lewi. Like most men in his village, he never did household chores. For him, such work is the wife's job. Therefore, he feels no need to do housework whenever he comes home from farming in the garden. "So when I come home, I just eat, (then) go out again," he said.

Such conditions slowly changed after the resident of Oelomin Village, Nekamese District, Kupang District, NTT, attended the training Gender Equality Male Supporters held by the TAS Consortium as part of the I WIL



Lewi Ablelo.  
(Gama/Oxfam in  
Indonesia)

programme in March 2021. He attended the training because the Oelomin Village Government appointed him as a representative of community leaders. The training opened his mind about men and women.

During the two-day training, he learnt many new lessons related to the household. Among other things, he learnt that when it comes to household chores, for example, men and women are equal. Both men and women can do household chores. This made him reflect on his attitude towards his wife, children, and neighbourhood.

“Since the first training day, I have learnt many new things, including the perspective of men and gender equality. The training material made me unable to sleep because what the resource person said was very different, even contradictory, to what I have understood and done daily,” he said.

Slowly, Om Lewi changed his attitude, especially towards his wife, children and the environment. Doing household chores began to become a regular thing for him. Every day, he shares tasks with his wife. When his wife has not cooked, Om Lewi will cook, similarly, when his wife has not had time to mop the floor. Om Lewi will do it. This applies to other household chores. In addition, as the head of the neighbourhood, when people commit violence, he does not hesitate to advise and admonish them not to commit violence against their spouses or anyone else.

Om Lewi realises that what he does with

housework still feels strange to some residents in his village. However, many residents understand what he is doing and provide full support. For this reason, he hopes to bring other men into his village to learn the same thing so that more men will have a new perspective on the relationship between men and women.

## A way out of the valley of darkness

A new understanding of gender equality changed Mustiadi’s attitude towards his wife and children at home and changed the course of his life.

Anyone can be at the deepest and darkest point of their life. What makes the difference is whether one can realise, rise, and fight their way out. That’s what Mustiadi, a resident of Gontoran Dusun, Batutulis Village, Jonggat Subdistrict, Central Lombok District, NTB, experienced. Being a collector of stolen motorbikes and having a habit of getting drunk made him labelled as the scum of the earth by his neighbours.

Mustiadi realised that what he did at that time violated all existing norms and laws. However, he argued that economic and social pressure made him fall into this trap. His decision to become a migrant worker in a foreign country still did not significantly solve his problems.

“I was able to build a house and pay off



debts, but let alone for business capital after returning home, it was still difficult to live daily,” she said.

In such a situation, he met Nurhayati, a resident in his Dusun who had been running an MSME (Micro Small Medium Enterprises-*Usaha Kecil Mikro dan Menengah*). Nurhayati invited her to join the ADARA Consortium’s activities, which started with the training of Gender Equality Male Supporters.

“At first, I thought this was just a trick to run the programme by selling us; in the end, they were the ones who got more salary,” he said.

However, he felt something different during the training. He remembers the words of one of the training facilitators, who said that learning things that one feels compelled to do will bring about a change for the better. Mustiadi, who wanted to change the image and raise his family’s self-esteem in the eyes of the village community, immediately put

into practice what he was trained to do.

He got closer to his family by sharing roles with his wife to do housework. Mustiadi increasingly realised that his family’s happiness was not solely based on the amount of money he gave them. This awareness of equal roles led him to join as a paralegal in his village. His neighbours’ views of him began to change. His activities as a paralegal and Gender Equality Male Supporters made him considered to have left the bad behaviour of the past.

“I have learnt many positive things from the consortium, especially being kind to women. The consortium changed me into a better person,” he said.

## Gender-Based Violence Elimination Pillar in Frame

Vinsensius Fomeni, Head of Maubesi Village (NTT) shares housework with his wife. (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)



Muhali, Secretary of Pemepek Village (NTB) shares housework with his wife. (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)



Drafting SOP of Gender-Based Violence Elimination Cases Handling Workshop in NTT. (Photo by Alfes S. Lopo)



Participants of Cross Learning Gender Equality Male Supporters-NTT. (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)



# PILLAR II

# WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

**W**omen Economic Empowerment is the second pillar of the I WIL programme. This pillar aims to realise empowered women through economic empowerment and inclusive business activities. Economic dependence has been one factor that weakens women's bargaining position, making them vulnerable to becoming victims of gender-based violence. This pillar also targets reducing women's workload and encouraging a more equitable division of domestic labour within the household. The hope is that by reducing women's workload at home, women can have more space to participate and develop in economic activities through business groups

and politics, for example, through village development planning meetings (musyawarah rencana pembangunan desa/musrenbangdes). Therefore, strengthening the bargaining position of women involved in the I WIL programme is an achievement of the Women Economic Empowerment pillar. The following articles present the efforts to encourage women to become economically empowered in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) and East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) provinces. These efforts include forming women's business groups and training on improving product quality, marketing strategies, and business legality.

# Empowered Women to Raise Collective Economy

One day if you have the chance to attend the World Superbike (WSBK) event at Mandalika Circuit in Lombok, you will see the Lumbung Sensek stand selling unique natural dyes woven scarves in the area outside the race arena. Who would have thought that the product, which has now penetrated the world market, was produced by a group of women who, even about three years ago, were still bowing down before the loan sharks?

During this time, if someone asks about the traditional weaving of Central Lombok, they will be directed to Sukarara Village in Jonggat Sub-district. Even if you search for the words “Lombok weaving” on an internet search engine, Sukarara Village will always appear as one of the results.

“But the fact is that many weavers in Sukarara are still laborers. Even though they have the means of production as well as knowledge,” said Haiziah Gazali, Chairperson of Gema Alam NTB, who is also the ADARA Consortium’s Women Economic Empowerment Specialist.

As laborers, weavers become vulnerable. They do not have power to determine prices as well as fair access to raw materials. ADARA Consortium Coordinator Muhammad Juaini says, they are in debt bondage at loan sharks.

Khairunnisa, a weaver from Sukarara Village, said that before being involved in I WIL activities, most weavers sold their fabrics to art shops and brokers. They got yarn as raw material from brokers, so when the brokers bought the cloth, its price



Muhammad Juaini, Coordinator of ADARA Consortium. (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)

Khairunnisa,  
Coordinator of  
Lumbung Sensek,  
Sukarara Village.  
(Gama/Oxfam in  
Indonesia)



would be deducted by cost of the yarn. Their woven fabric will be even cheaper if the weaver has loan to the broker and its price is deducted again with the payment. A cloth worth Rp350,000 can be bought by brokers for only Rp75,000.

“The relationship between buying, selling and loans to collectors is individual. And that’s what all the women here do,” said Nisa, as she is usually called.

The loans are usually for children’s school fees and other urgent daily needs. The situation worsen because they only rely on sales through tourist souvenir shops and from government guests. Their innovations have stagnated, and the motifs and packaging of the woven fabrics produced have stayed the same for generations.

This static situation makes them unable to escape the economic traps as vulnerable as they are. Being economically vulnerable also makes them vulnerable to arbitrary actions, including violence, especially from their partners. This point is the basis of the Women Economic Empowerment pillar.

“The Women Economic Empowerment pillar is a prevention strategy that we are trying to do. Women’s lack of economic capability and capacity contributes to the violence they experience,” said Juaini.

## Self-confidence leads to innovation

The powerlessness of women weavers is ironic. This is because they have the means of production, land, and fame. Knowledge is needed, and of course, before that is the realization that they deserve knowledge in the principle of equality.

That is part of the Women Economic Empowerment pillar activities. Not only training business skills but also strengthening essential capacity related to equality.

“At first, I was shy to meet people; no woman here dared to express her opinion. After participating in several training, it started to change,” says Nisa.

That courage slowly increased her confidence, which led to creativity. They tweaked the natural dye materials and the types and motifs of their woven

fabrics to break out of the monotonous habits that saturated the market. The women weavers then formed a group called Lumbung Sensek. Nisa was appointed as its leader. Lumbung Sensek already has 28 members from six sub villages.

Being in a group means they no longer work individually and divide themselves into specializations in work and training. They are divided into product, design and marketing divisions. They finally created a signature product, a natural dye scarf, specifically with a brown motif from the skin of tamarind seeds that grow in Sukarara. That product has been displayed in the WSBK event area since last year and has received many orders from outside Lombok.

“We are just a lever, making them realize that they have potential within themselves and the abundance of resources around them. Once they are aware and confident, they begin to control all stages of the value chain from the supply of raw materials to the market,” says Haiziah.

As the group matured and developed, with the support of the Sukarara village government, a more inclusive concept of Lumbung Sensek was initiated.

According to Zainal Rahman, Sukarara’s village secretary, what Lumbung Sensek does is truly economic empowerment for women weavers. So the village government fully supports the concept of Lumbung Sensek Weaving Tourism



Zainal  
Rahman,  
Secretary  
of Sukarara  
Village.  
[Gama/Oxfam  
in Indonesia]

## The sweet blessing of palm sugar

A similar story exists in Jurit Baru Village, Pringgasela Sub-district, East Lombok District. For a long time, most women in the village had two products to sell: banana chips and palm sap water. The banana chips were only marketed in their village. Meanwhile, the palm sap water only last a day. After that, it will spoil and must be thrown away.

“We gained much knowledge from the training. We realized the huge potential of palm sap water but need skills to process it into other forms of product. This project provided training and even helped open access to the market,” said Ustini, Chairperson of the Critical and Creative Women’s Group (KPKK) of Jurit Baru Village.

Ustini, and other women involved in I WIL, then processed palm sap into granulated palm sugar. Granulated palm sugar with good quality can last 3.5 years. This innovation means that palm sap water is no longer wasted. There is also more market demand for this kind of sugar.

Granulated palm sugar has even been accepted by modern retailers such as Alfamidi and MGM because it meets their quality standards and has legality. Eventually, granulated palm sugar that Ustini and her group produced was displayed at a booth at the ASEAN People Forum in Cambodia in 2022.

In line with Lumbung Sensek, they formed a group called KPKK, which now has 26 members. In addition to a clear structure, SOP, and division of roles, the KPKK members also have a particular land for palm trees. They envision developing Jurit Baru as a palm village where they will nurture and process all parts of the palm, including the sap, leaves and roots.

“We are no longer worried about the market; whatever our production will be accommodated by the retailers. The government’s support has been amazing, both product tools and various facilities, including licensing. All of this would not have been possible without our consortium friends through I WIL,” said Ustini.



Ustini,  
Coordinator  
of KPKK, Jurit  
Baru Village.  
(Gama/Oxfam  
in Indonesia)

## Cube palm sugar

In Pemepek Village, Baiq Nilawati came up with a brilliant idea after attending training in Jurit Baru Village, organised by ADARA Consortium. Instead of replicating the practice of making granulated palm sugar, she produced cube palm sugar.

“It’s sugar in the form of small dice, which is practical to consume because the amount is just right for one serving of drinks such as coffee,” she said.

The dice sugar product then become bestseller. Its durability is also very long, especially if stored in the freezer.

Before producing sugar cube, like most of the women in her village, Nilawati made sugar shell. This sugar shell is large and weighs 1-1.5kg. According to her, sugar shell is less popular because it is very troublesome to process. Many have injured their hands when slicing the sugar shell.

Nilawati's dice sugar is now not only marketed in her village. Her products have reached other villages in Central Lombok, such as Pagutan, Nyerot, Batutulis, and even West Lombok.

"Apart from palm, there are also villages that overproduce soya during the dry season. As a result, the price fell, and many were damaged because they were not absorbed by the market. Then we trained the women to make soya based foods such as soya sticks," said Juaini.

He added that there are also villages that have an abundance of chillies during the harvest season and experience a similar situation with soybeans. Finally, it is processed into dry chilli sauce with various flavours, among others, labelled Sambal D'cobek. So according to him, although the dynamics of each village are different, they can finally have a typical product with standards that even pass the curation of the NTB Trade Office.

"After the quality has met the standard, we are trying to help expand market access, among others, through Tokopedia. In the future, after

there is capacity building related to management on Tokopedia, we hope that the shop admin will be directly held by the group that owns the product. Currently, they are already using WhatsApp Business," said Haiziah.

The use of WhatsApp Business and other latest information technology has indeed been trained to them. Both women's groups in NTB and NTT have received digital marketing training, including designing kits using the Canva application and the ATEAR strategy for online marketing.

The women have dared to break out of their long confinement and accept new things with an open mind to create a new and more promising future.



Baiq Nilawati,  
palm sugar  
producer.  
(Gama/Oxfam  
in Indonesia)

# Overcoming Obstacles Through Women Business Group

**W**eaving for women in Oesena Village, Amarasi Sub-district, Kupang District, East Nusa Tenggara, is no longer just a seasonal activity. This differs from the conditions three years ago when weaving was only done after someone placed an order. Oesena Village weavers no longer must wait for orders because the market for their weaving products has become more expansive.

The difficulty of selling products is an obstacle women business actors face in Oesena Village and several other villages in East Nusa Tenggara. In addition to marketing, their initiatives in supporting the family economy are constrained by many things, so their businesses need to develop.


Widia Ullu, Women Economic Empowerment Specialist of the TAS Consortium in the I WIL programme supported by Oxfam in Indonesia, said that before the I WIL programme, business development for women's groups was challenging. She saw three main factors that caused this: constraints in marketing, product quality, and legality.

Therefore, efforts to strengthen women's business groups were carried out by focusing on these three obstacles. Capacity building for women who are members of business groups is carried out through a series of training with materials that suit their needs.

## Based on local potentials

According to Widia, capacity building must be adjusted to the existing potential. That's way, the training materials will follow suit. For areas that are strong in weaving, for example, she sees that the weaving market is saturated. The suggestion to use fabric produced by the local weavers as uniform employee material has helped the weavers. However, absorption still needs to be improved. Therefore, a breakthrough was needed. So, the idea emerged to make derivative products from woven fabrics, such as wallets, bags, and clothing modifications using weaving. The breakthrough was quite successful.

As for areas vital in agricultural products, such as sweet potato,

A portrait of Widia Ullu, a woman with grey hair, wearing a blue shirt and a patterned scarf. She is speaking and has a microphone clipped to her shirt. The background is slightly blurred, showing an indoor setting.

Widia Ullu,  
Women Economic  
Empowerment  
Specialist  
Consortium TAS.  
(Gama/Oxfam in  
Indonesia)

cassava and banana producers, they are encouraged to process them into snacks. In addition to improving the quality of the snacks made so far, the marketing aspect is also examined. In the past, the snack makers used to pack their snacks in small containers and sell them to neighbouring stalls for Rp 1,000 per pack. After the training, they were encouraged to produce snacks that could be highly valued. For this reason, the quality of the products and packaging was improved.

They also received counselling on food safety in collaboration with the Health Office (Dinas Kesehatan) and the Drug and Food Control (Badan Pengawas Obat dan Makanan (BPOM)). The process helped the women with processed food products to take care of the legality of the products to make them more acceptable to the market.

## Group up to be strong

A business group is one of the essential aspects in the assistance carried out so that women business actors are accommodated in one forum to learn from each other and progress together. For this reason, women business owners are encouraged to be active in business group activities.

Marcelina Boymau, Chairperson of the Ainan Fen Women's Group in Oesena Village, Amarasi Subdistrict, Kupang District, said that long before the weaving group was formed, weaving had become part of the daily lives of residents, especially women. Almost all residents of Oesena Village are weavers. However, they weave seasons only, namely if there is no working season in the fields and gardens. Weaving is done in their spare time after harvest because it is not considered a good economic activity.



Activity of Ainan Fen Women's group, Oesena Village.  
(Photo by Yohannes Dody Kolo)

After the weaving group was formed, there were many changes occurred. Group members now understand marketing strategies to target buyers in Kupang and outside the area reached by social media, calculate the cost of production, and make product labels.

All of this has given them more certainty about the market for their woven products. That way, they have started regularly weaving to add income to the family economy. "So we can send our children to elementary, junior high, high school and even college," she said.

Oliva Lopo, a weaver in Tunfeu Village, Nekamese Subdistrict, Kupang District, had a similar story. She started joining the weaving group in her village in 2021. The mother of two initially admitted that she was reluctant to join the group because she considered it a waste of time. Moreover, being a group member means having to pay

regular dues. "But after being invited two or three times, I was interested in joining," she said.

After actively joining the Women of Love Group, Oliva began to feel the benefits. She was trusted to participate in several business development training activities. She did not just attend one training. She attended, among others, training on digital marketing and preparing marketing materials (marketing kit) and business meetings. These training were attended by members of women's business groups from 12 I WIL programme villages in NTT.

In marketing training, Oliva learnt how to promote products and create digital promotional materials. As for the promotion channels, she was taught to use many social media platforms. "I never knew about all that before. During the training, I learnt a lot. I promoted my products through social media and the Canva application.



Oliva Lopo optimizes her smart phone for promoting her products. (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)

At that time, some people directly ordered the products that I marketed and were immediately delivered and did not ask questions anymore about prices and sizes because everything was clearly stated there,” she explained.

Then in training on business meetings, she learnt about potential buyers targeted in the future. “So we can already target our products. What kind of people become the target, and we can make the products we make following the targets we plan. It’s already a fantasy for us that we already know what kind of people will buy, and the weaving we make is adjusted to the taste of the target,” she explained.

All of this has made Oliva feel a real change. Now she and other members of the weaving group have a more precise market, so there are always orders for their products. “I don’t wait for people to order. But weaving continues because a market is already ready to accept our products,” she added.

## Networking with various stakeholders

Women’s business groups were also formed in other villages in the I WIL programme area in NTT, including weaving, food processing and livestock business groups. In addition to receiving training on improving product quality, business legality and marketing, they are also connected with various parties who can help.

Novilia Simamora, a Sehati Women’s Forum member in Oebelo Village, Kupang District, felt a real change after attending various pieces of training. Her snacks, which used to be wrapped in small plastic bags to be delivered to neighbouring stalls, have been replaced with thicker packaging. Her marketing no longer relies solely on neighbours but also targets offices of government agencies, as well as in crowded places, and the gallery of the Dekranasda (*Dewan Kerajinan Nasional Daerah*–Regional National Craft Council) NTT. “There is a change in income. It can support the cost of living in the house,” she said.

Stephen N. Parera from Dekranasda NTT said that his office fully supports the mentoring programme for women's business groups conducted by the TAS Consortium. It provides product marketing training, both offline and online. In addition, it can also provide training and counselling for food safety. Products from business groups that have received training will also be assisted with marketing.

"Friends from MSMEs do not need to worry about selling their products to Dekranasda. Because usually, we buy directly. Cash and carry. So when they bring their goods to us, we immediately buy them. The goal is that they can immediately produce again. So that when they place an order, the stock is always there," he explained.

Nancy Theresia Tibuludji, a consultant at the PLUT (*Pusat Layanan Usaha Terpadu*-Integrated Business Service Centre) of the NTT Provincial Cooperative and Manpower and Transmigration Office, said that her office has so far facilitated



Dekranasda NTT Gallery .  
(Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)

licensing for some women's businesses in collaboration with the TAS Consortium. She emphasised that business legality is necessary because it will lead to other things, such as distribution permits for home industry production.



Celery sticks produced by Sehati Women's Forum, Oebelo Village. (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)

# The Women of Gold

It is not uncommon for something seen as trivial and even considered rubbish to have high economic value. It all depends on motivation and creativity. In these formidable women's hands, once worthless products turn into gold.

In South Pringgasela Village, Pringgasela Sub-district, East Lombok District, and West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), the women transformed weaving scraps into high-value products.

Rerempek is the name of the woven fabric promoted by the Nina Penenun Group, the name of the women weavers' organisation in the village. Rerempek, which is woven from leftover threads, has been around for a long time. However, not many people were interested in making it, so it became increasingly rare.

"The selling price is very low. Eventually, many weavers, especially elderly women, chose to throw away the leftover yarn," said Siti Hidayati, Treasurer of the Nina Weavers Group.


The low selling price, according to Ida, as she is usually called, is due to the limited market that can absorb Rerempek products. Involvement in

the I WIL project meant that the ADARA Consortium assisted Ida and her weaver friends expand market access. The next task was to think creatively about Rerempek.


"At that time, we had not formed a group officially. We finally started making Rerempek in the form of scarves, specifically using natural dyes. The results were outstanding, and the possible price was much higher," she says.



Siti Hidayati.  
(Gama/Oxfam  
in Indonesia)



Soya crackers  
produced by Patuh  
Angen Group, Nyerot  
Village. (Gama/Oxfam  
in Indonesia)



Rerempok  
produced by Nina  
Penenun Group,  
Nyerot Village.  
(Gama/Oxfam in  
Indonesia)

"The normal price of cloth is around Rp 200,000, but it can be sold for Rp 100,000 to middlemen. Usually, when we are pressed for daily needs or children's school fees," she said.

These efforts are worthwhile. After the division of roles in the group had gone well, the flow of production and sales began to increase. Scarves made from Rerempok became the new icon of South Pringgasela. The product and Nina Penenun were recognised outside the region.

The village government's support is flowing, starting with providing a location for the weaving centre and, most recently, the initiation of a weaving school in 2023. This weaving school is part of weaving tourism and fosters interest and weaving skills, including in children so that one day the weaving tradition will not disappear from South Pringgasela.

## Pol soya crackers

If Nina Penenun's creativity has a foundation of weaving tradition in South Pringgasela Village, the creative business that grew in Nyerot Village, Jonggat Sub-district, Central Lombok District, NTB, was born from exploring potential and testing. It was Suharyati who started trying to make products derived from soybeans.

Soybeans are widely grown in Nyerot but are generally sold when young or as dry seeds. After receiving training from the ADARA Consortium through I WIL, it occurred to her to utilise soybeans.

"After many experiments, we finally found the right product: soybean crackers. The flavour and quality were accepted by many. I named the brand Pol. After that, I was trusted by the group to promote this product to outside parties directly," she said.



The group in question is Patuh Angen, a women's group in Nyerot that focuses on economic empowerment. The group now consists of 14 members, with Suharyati as its treasurer.

Suharyati emphasises that the change was only possible with their training in her village. The women, especially those who are members of Patuh Angen, can develop themselves thanks to the new knowledge and skills from the training.

"More importantly, we can help other village friends outside the group so that we can all progress together, including economically," said Suharyati, an early childhood education centre teacher.

Thanks to her soya cracker creations, Suharyati has had the opportunity to participate in various exhibitions up to the provincial level. Her products are often brought as souvenirs from Nyerot, even to France.

Now Suharyati's aspirations can go one step further. The Nyerot village government decided to provide capital assistance. A total of 10 business groups received the assistance, each worth Rp 10 million.

## Sales-boosting design

The simple design skills have made Oliva Lopo's weaving business grow. With attractive promotional designs, she can reach buyers anywhere through online media.

It all started with digital marketing training organised by the TAS Consortium as part of the I WIL programme in mid-2022. Oliva, a Kasih Women's Group member in Tunfeu Village, Nekamese District, Kupang District, NTT, was sent to attend the training. She was taught how to design promotional materials using the Canva application during the training.

Oliva Lopo.  
(Gama/Oxfam  
in Indonesia)



"I can now design flyers for my products, and those of my group members using the Canva app and promote them online. Unlike when we just took photos and promoted, now we can do it more attractively," she said.

Thanks to these design skills, Oliva and her group now get many orders and have a more comprehensive market network. "My new market is around Kupang City, namely E-MART in Oesana, IKM FUA FUNI and new acquaintances through Facebook," she added.

Before learning about marketing methods, Oliva experienced how difficult it was to sell her weavings. Previously, her weavings were usually only bought by relatives. Therefore, the buyers of her weavings were minimal. In one month, she could only sell one piece of cloth. She once tried selling her

woven products to a souvenir shop in Kupang City. However, she often took her products home because they were rejected. After all, there were still many stocks in the shop. As a result, during the Covid-19 pandemic, her economic condition was complicated.

This condition made her decide to join the Kasih Women Group. Oliva was invited because she was seen as a young weaver who would be able to continue the weaving tradition in Tunfeu Village. Since joining the group, her economic condition has improved.

According to Oliva, the training in the I WIL programme did not only teach her about design. She also learnt about market surveys, the importance of label identity and attractive packaging, and production standards to match market demand. She can also now calculate the cost of production of her woven products.

In the future, Oliva hopes that many people will like her work. She also hopes to train other young women to be able to weave so that they can maintain and preserve local wisdom.

## Cultivating local food

Yam, pumpkin, moringa leaves, and celery are now Novilia Simamora's favourite local ingredients. The resident of Oebelo Village, East Kupang Sub-district, Kupang District, NTT, turns local ingredients into quality snacks.

Before she started working with local ingredients, Novilia used to sell salt and

homemade cakes by dropping them off at neighbouring kiosks. Her business did not flourish due to various obstacles. Her situation began to change when she joined the Sehati Women's Forum. As a member of the forum, she had the opportunity to attend some business training. One of them was training in local food processing. There she learnt to recognise the ingredients around her to be processed into food products. Armed with her baking experience, she quickly absorbed the training materials. Now, she can make moringa, purple sweet potato, pumpkin, and celery sticks. She also makes garlic peanuts, *kacang sembunyi* and others.

In addition to processing local food, she also learnt to make better food packaging to attract buyers. "Not many people know there are good local foods we can improve with better packaging. In the past, we used ordinary plastic. Now we have hard-standing pouches," she said.

Furthermore, she attended training on business legality and was even helped apply for a product licence until she finally succeeded. In addition, she and other group members also learnt about marketing. "I was introduced to places where I could sell my products. The chairwoman or the assistant took me to try offering them in offices, crowded places and at the Dekranasda (*Dewan Kerajinan Nasional Daerah*-Regional National Craft Council), where we are currently entrusted. My products have arrived at Dekranasda. Praise God it went well," she said.

From the various pieces of training, she feels that she has experienced changes. Her product packaging is more attractive. Marketing has also expanded. Along with these changes, her husband, who used to be less supportive, now helps her business. Initially, her husband thought her activities as a group member and snack producer had left the house unattended. However, after she gave him some understanding, he supported her. "Praise God, now I am blessed, supported that I can do it. And he always helps me selling the products," she said.

In addition to increasing her income, Novilia is proud that her products are recognised. She hopes her business will continue progressing and her products will become more widely known. She also aspires to have her showcase in a roadside shop.



Novilia  
Simamora.  
(Gama/Oxfam  
in Indonesia)

## Women Economic Empowerment Pillar in Frame



Digital marketing workshop for business women's groups in NTT. (Photo by Muhammad Ulum)



Members of women's business group in Ajaobaki Village peel sweet potatoes for snack. (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)



Woven products of Ainan Fen Women's Group, Oesena Village (NTT). (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)



Jamu or herbs produces by women's group in Pagutan Village (NTB). (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)



The process of making natural dye woven scarves in Lumbung Sensek, NTB. (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)



Sticks produced by Sehati Women's Forum (NTT). (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)



Member of women's group in Oebe-lo Village (NTT) produces moringa tea. (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)



Baiq Nelly Yuniarti, Head of NTB Trade Office with the IWL products displayed in one of NTB mall. (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition. A large, irregular green shape dominates the center. Overlapping this are several other shapes: a teal shape at the top left, a purple shape at the top right, and a teal shape with a rounded bottom right corner in the middle left. At the bottom, there are more abstract shapes in orange, purple, and maroon.

# PILLAR III

# PROMOTING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

**T**he third pillar of the I WIL programme is Women Leadership. This pillar is the core of the I WIL programme itself, which encourages women's leadership. This pillar targets more women and young women to have greater access and control over social leadership and political and economic resources so that women can be equal in family, community and public contexts. This means women's leadership must be kept from the other two pillars. This comprehensive three-pillar approach

makes I WIL different from similar interventions, as it is evident that the issues of violence against women, women's economic empowerment and women's leadership are interrelated and influence each other. The following articles show how the transformation process of women who initially felt unworthy to lead became brave enough to accept challenges and carry out the trust given to them seriously.

# Women are No Longer Silent Backseaters

Like most women in NTB, Dewi Handayani thinks only men can and should be leaders, in any domain. She still holds this belief even though she is a university graduate.

One day, feeling that she needed to gain weaving skills, Dewi, who comes from South Pringgasela Village, Pringgasela Sub-district, East Lombok District, brought her to the Nina Penenun weaving group. She had no idea that this step would fundamentally change her consciousness.

"I met my consortium members at Nina Penenun and was invited to join the

women's leadership training. By then I realised that women could also be leaders. I can organise other women and even men," she said.

Dewi's initial understanding of the role of women as formal and informal leaders is reflected in NTB's IDG (Gender Empowerment Index)) in 2022, which was recorded at 52.54 and categorised as low. This index is seen from women's involvement in parliament, women as professionals and women's income contribution. Likewise, the Human Development Index (HDI) for women in NTB in 2022 was 66.96, compared to 73.52 for men.

Dewi Handayani, member of women empowerment division of LPMD Pringgasela (NTB) as well as the secretary of Nina Penenun Group. (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)





Members of NTB women's group supported by I WIL actively participated in business matching event in Lombok, 2023. (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)

Men's understanding of equality in the WIL I project area is undoubtedly lower. Frequent violence against women and the absence of opportunity for women's participation in decision-making in the family to the village are illustrations.

"That is why at the beginning of introducing the concept and objectives of I WIL, what emerged was not awareness but resistance. Finally, we tried to apply modules we had prepared to train men on gender issues. Including sharing roles in the household regarding financial management and decision-making. We train men, especially community leaders," said Muhammad Juaini, Coordinator of the ADARA Consortium.

## The village opens its doors

Slowly this lead into positive results. Changes in understanding and attitudes began to occur when the personal factors of these leaders were exposed. They transformed and

began opening space for women in the family and the village.

Zainal Rahman, the village secretary of Sukarara Village, said that village government now strongly encourages women's involvement and facilitates women's groups in official forums. For example, in sub-village and village meetings, there is a particular forum for women so the village government can capture their aspirations without interruption. Women have also started to fill strategic positions such as on the Village Consultative Body.

Muhsin, Chief of Batutulis Village, Jonggat Sub-district, Central Lombok District, expressed a similar sentiment. In Batutulis, women must be invited as active participants in every decision-making forum in the village.

He also requires women to be part of Team 9, the drafting team for the RKPDes (*Rencana Kerja Pemerintah Desa*-Village Government Work Plan). The number of women in the team is

4-5 people. This team will oversee the RKPDes until the execution of the budget so that they can monitor whether the aspirations of women conveyed at the beginning of the preparation will still be realised. "Women now no longer just come, sit in the back, and stay silent during meetings," he said.

The attitude of the village government, which is predominantly male, is in line with the increasing empowerment of women in their villages. Dewi, for example, is no longer a person who thinks only men can be leaders. Dewi is now the Women's Empowerment Division of the LPMD (*Lembaga Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Desa*-Village Empowerment Organization), the Secretary of the Nina Weavers Group, and the person in charge of the weaving school. She always consults with the consortium team so that the

leadership training materials she gets can be applied to the group and herself.

As a representative of the LPMD and Nina Penenun, she proposed several programmes in the village development planning meeting, including the weaving school programme. The programme was approved for the 2023 South Pringgasela Village RKPDes. "I feel many changes in myself; my confidence has increased after being involved in I WIL. Previously, I was rarely involved in village activities. Now I am often invited by the village government," he said.

As a village official in Pagutan Village, Batukliang Sub-district, Central Lombok District, Haeniyah also felt a tremendous increase in capacity after being involved in I WIL activities. The training of facilitator she received enabled her to organize the community better. She was also trained to prepare the RPKDes more systematically and inclusively because in the past even though she is village official, she never knew the flow of the RPKDes preparation and who prepared it.

"I feel that since 2022 women have been listened to in this village. They are no longer underestimated like before when any proposal was never accepted. Yesterday at the last RPKDes, women's proposal on capital assistance for economic empowerment through the Pagutan Berkarya Group was accepted and



Haeniyah,  
Head of Social  
Welfare unit  
of Pagutan  
Village. (Gama/  
Oxfam in  
Indonesia)

budgeted at Rp20 million,” said Haeniyah, who is also the village paralegal.

## Berugaq Nine<sup>1</sup>

According to Juaini, the impact of the Women Leadership pillar is discernible in opening up access to information and increasing the role of women in strategic matters, such as decision-making on matters that affect their lives. As a result, they can access resources through political channels in the village. Information entering and leaving the village is also now through women’s groups so that it can quickly spread to other women.

The promotion of women in the villages of the I WIL region continues beyond a group of people who are directly involved in a series of project activities. Capacity building must be more equitable to ensure the sustainability of the changes initiated in the village. One of them is forming a forum that becomes a place to share knowledge and increase capacity in all fields, both in the economic field, paralegal and basic skills in village meetings.

“The concept was realised in Berugaq Nine. We took the Berugaq Nine facilitators from women involved in the three pillars of I WIL. So there are paralegals, business groups, village officials, and BPD. The support from all villages is quite strong, so we are confident about the sustainability of

this Women Leadership pillar,” said Haiziah Gazali, Chairperson of Gema Alam NTB, who is also the Women Economic Empowerment and Women Leadership Specialist of the ADARA Consortium.

A total of 18 women from nine villages, she said, are ready to continue disseminating an understanding of gender equality, economic empowerment, and awareness of the importance of being involved in village forums. Dewi and Haeniyah are among those women.

“Fair enough to say that currently, all women in I WIL project areas are women who can express their opinions. Dare to express their opinions to be heard. And they have also been able to contribute to the economy and decision-making both in the household and the village where they live,” Susi Herawati, Project Manager of Oxfam in Indonesia’s I WIL Programme.



Haiziah Gazali,  
Coordinator of  
Gema Alam as  
well as Women  
Economic  
Empowerment  
Specialist  
of ADARA  
Consortium.  
(Gama/Oxfam  
in Indonesia)

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1 Traditional place for women to exchange ideas, learn from each other and increase capacity

# Recognising Women's Leadership in Various Sectors of Life

**W**omen's participation in the public sphere, especially in rural areas, still needs to be improved. As a result, women's voices are generally not heard in policy-making forums, whose impact will be felt by women. It takes several efforts to encourage women to speak in public.

In the I WIL programme in the East Nusa Tenggara region, efforts to encourage women's leadership were carried out first by exploring the factors that hinder women's participation. Gender inequality due to patriarchal norms have limited women's access to resources, limiting their ability to emerge. For this reason, steps are needed to get women access to economic, political or cultural resources.

One of the steps taken is through women's leadership training. The training equips participants to understand that women have the right to lead at the family level, neighbourhood, or government. Women's leadership is essential to formulate public policies at the village actively and national levels to benefit women.

Women's courage to appear in the public sphere cannot be separated from their self-confidence. For this reason, the training also aims to increase women's confidence that they can be independent and empowered in various spheres of life. The estuary of the training series is to encourage women's leadership.

## Be economically empowered

Access to economic resources is one factor that inhibits women's leadership. Economic dependence makes it difficult for women to express their aspirations. Therefore, training related to women's economic empowerment is essential to encouraging women's leadership.

Oliva Lopo, a weaver in Tunfeu Village, Nekamese Sub-district, Kupang District, now understands that women can lead. Women can do two or three jobs simultaneously, so the assumption that women's job is only to take care of the house and raise children is not valid. As a woman, she weaves to earn money to fulfil her family's needs while still doing



Women leadership workshop in NTT.  
(Photo by Alfes Stefanus Lopo)

household chores. Even when doing housework, women are leaders at home.

“Indirectly, I also feel like a leader in the household because I am a single parent. I have two children. I also feel I can be a leader because I have to look after or educate my children,” she said.

Oliva admits she is very grateful for participating in various activities in the I WIL programme to gain much experience and experience positive changes. Economically, her income has now increased. She feels she can stand on her own feet by earning money through her work as a weaver. Being economically empowered made her realise that, as a woman, she could also be a leader.

Marcelina Boymau, the Coordinator of the Ainan Fen Women’s Group in Oesena Village, Amarasi Sub-district, Kupang District, also feels that having her income, she is not entirely dependent on her husband and can even help the

family economy. This is an essential factor that can encourage women’s leadership. “Because we also have the principle as women that if the husband has money, we must also have money,” she said.

As the head of a women’s business group, Marcelina can see that all group members feel economic empowerment. For this reason, in the future, she hopes to recruit girls who have dropped out of school so that they can have economic activities. This has already begun. Several teenage girls are now producing accessories such as necklaces and earrings from woven patchwork.

## Changing men’s perceptions

Apart from economic factors, women’s participation is often hampered by the view that women’s job is caring for the home. Therefore, efforts must

I WIL project has changed men's perception about gender equality. One of the result is men are willing to do housework. (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)



encourage women's leadership by changing men's perceptions of women's roles. This is done through the Gender Equality Male Supporters programme, where men understand the division of roles and socialise this to the community, especially male groups.

Vincencius Sobe, part of the Gender Equality Male Supporters activities in Maubesi Village, Central Insana Sub-district, North Central Timor District, NTT, sees efforts to socialise the equal division of roles between men and women in his village have shown results. Many men in the neighbourhood now help their wives with household chores. They no longer feel inferior just because they do housework such as washing dishes, drawing water, cooking, taking children to the *Posyandu*, and taking children to school.

Lewi Yulianus Ablelo, aka Om Lewi, a resident of Oelomin Village, Nekamese District, Kupang District, NTT, recognised this. In the past, he did not want to do housework because it was his wife's job. That slowly changed after he attended the Gender Equality Male Supporters training. The training opened his mind about men and women. After returning from the training, Om Lewi admitted that he was restless and could not sleep. "It turns out that all this time, my actions were not good for the family," he said.

Starting from this personal reflection, he changed his attitude, especially towards his wife, children and the environment. One day when he returned from the garden, he did not find his wife at home. His wife participated in activities at the village office and left no food home. Such a situation would have made Om Lewi angry with his wife. However, this time he was not angry.

"If I waited for my wife, I would starve; what about the children? Then I took action, I cooked so I could continue working again. From there, I started to change my behaviour at home first," he adds.

These changes in husbands have a tremendous impact on their spouses. Wives can have time to rest and do other activities outside housework, such as running an economic business or participating in community activities.

The government sector also feels the change in perception of women's capacity. The head of Ajaobaki Village, North Mollo Sub-district, South Central

Timor District, Obed I Kasse, said that in village deliberation forums, women's representatives are now always invited.

"It is impossible to invite all women in this village. But how many people do we need to invite to represent women in voting? We usually look at those who can speak, those who can see the condition of this village. We invite them to be able to contribute their thoughts in the forum," he said.

According to him, there are now more and more women who are tough and great. They can contribute to society. For this reason, women with these abilities need to be accommodated to contribute to the village. According to him, in Ajaobaki Village, women's

leadership is evident. In the religious sector, two out of four church leaders are women. In the government sector, women become section heads, heads of affairs and village secretaries. There is also a woman who is the head of the neighbourhood association (RT).

"Only for *linmas* (a.k.a *perlindungan masyarakat* or *pertahanan sipil*, *hansip*, a civilian defence for the society), there are no women yet. But in neighbouring villages, there are already female security guards. This means that they are also not underestimated, but we see them as great people in the village," he added.

Obed I Kase, Head of Ajaobaki Village. (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)





Gender Equality Male Supporters activity in Maubesi Village. (Photo by Stefanus Kou)



Activity of Ainan Fen Women's Group in Oesena Village. (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)

# Rise to Lead from Downturn

**H**aving been devastated by domestic violence, Besa or Mama Yuli did not want to drown her sorrows. The single parent of two children in Kuanek Village, Central Bikomi Sub-district, North Central Timor District, East Nusa Tenggara Province, got up and used her experience to help others. Seeing her ability, she was trusted as chief of Dusun by the Kuanek Village Government.

Women becoming Chief of Dusun (*Kadus*) is rare in NTT. However, Mama Yuli erased doubts about women's leadership. She became the head of Dusun I, which oversees two neighbourhoods (RT) with 37 households consisting of 63 men and 54 women. She felt like the "moon fell into her lap" when she was elected to become the chief.

"In the beginning, it was hard for me because what should I do as Dusun head and what about the community's judgement about my past?" she said. However, the support of her family, village government, community and friends

became a force that encouraged her to be strong and brave.

Before becoming a *Kadus*, Mama Yuli was a housewife. She focused daily on doing housework and caring for her two children. In 2018, her husband left home. Amidst the impact of psychological and economic violence due to her ex-husband's decision, Mama Yuli struggled to raise two children alone. "I am a victim of violence, namely a victim of IJM (ingkar janji menikah/ broken marriage vow)," she said while chewing her favourite betel nut.

Mama Yuli often meets with her friends to share her feelings and to forget her sadness. In addition, she also keeps herself busy by being actively involved in community and religious activities.

In early 2020, Mama Yuli was invited by the Kuanek Village Government to participate in a discussion on gender-based violence, women's economic empowerment and women's leadership. The TAS Consortium facilitated the discussion

through the YABIKU Foundation NTT institution in the I WIL programme. The discussion opened Mama Yuli's eyes to various forms of gender-based violence and the various efforts that can be made to eliminate violence. Not only that, she also gained knowledge related to women's economic empowerment and women's leadership.

The new knowledge she gained from the discussion made Mama Yuli become brave and get out of her slump. She became more active in various community activities. In March 2020, Mama Yuli was selected by the Kuanek Village Government as one of eight Kadus in the village.

At the end of 2021, Mama Yuli had the opportunity to attend paralegal training organised by the TAS Consortium. During the training, she learned how to identify cases of violence, counselling victims, assist victims and refer cases to service provider agencies. The training made her feel called to become a paralegal to assist women and children victims of violence in her village.

By becoming a Kadus and paralegal, Mama Yuli admits that she wants to continue to fight with women to help fellow women who are victims of violence to get out of the shackles of their oppression. She will continue to encourage women in her village to speak up.

## Realising dreams that were interrupted

Forced into marriage when she was 16 years old and still in grade 3 of MTs (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah-the same level as Junior High School*), Indrawati (31) had become an apathetic woman. She didn't care about the neighbourhood, never got involved in village activities, and even at home, she was mostly silent. Moreover, the space to speak for women could have been more extensive. She did not dare to imagine the future that awaited her when she saw her friends still happily attending school while she was already a housewife.

"The regret is long," said the resident of Jurit Baru Village, Pringgasela Subdistrict, East Lombok District, NTB.

Before the I WIL project, when she first joined the training with Gema Alam, a member of the ADARA Consortium, she did so quietly. After all, because the activity continued with the next activity, Indra still asked her husband for permission. Unexpectedly, her husband had no problem with it and even encouraged her to participate in similar activities, albeit with many restrictions. A rare attitude for a husband in her village.

"Maybe because she is old enough. So even though she is a perpetrator of child marriage, she still has the



Indrawati. (Gama/Oxfam  
in Indonesia)

awareness to let me participate in some activities,” she added.

Indrawati became more involved in activities and became a Posyandu cadre. That’s when she started practising public speaking little by little. Eventually, she was chosen as the head of the Jurit Baru Village Cadre Forum.

However, the anxiety came back when she understood that women in her village had been experiencing and living through a form of gender injustice and women’s downturn. The difference was that she was now more confident and brave enough to

explain to her husband, who began to complain about the gender equality themes in training held by the consortium. Consistently and slowly, Indra continued to communicate the material she received directly to her husband.

“Finally, he changed. From only allowing activities to being willing to share household chores until finally, he wanted to join the Gender Equality Male Supporters,” she said.

On the other hand, her active participation in village activities led to Indra being appointed treasurer of the BUMDes (*Badan Usaha Milik*

*Desa/Village-Owned Enterprise*). Likewise, she was chosen as treasurer of the PKK (*Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga/Family Welfare Development*) organisation. She has also managed the Critical and Creative Women's Group of Jurit Baru Village until now.

This extraordinary development was the result of Indrawati's dramatically increased self-confidence. She then revealed her dream of continuing her education to her husband and got the green light. Her original education did not reach the level of MTs, equivalent to junior high school. But now, Indrawati is steadily studying in the Accounting Department at a university in East Lombok, a major that aligns with the fields she is working in now. Her concern for women's education is also part of what she campaigns for around her.

## The only woman

Suhaeniyah, a resident of Nyerot Village, Jonggat Subdistrict, Central Lombok District, NTB, had a similar experience. The lack of capacity and information intake has eroded her confidence. As a result, although she is a cadre of women in the village, it is more of a formality. There was no room for capacity building, let alone the opportunity to be involved in critical decision-making.

Along with her involvement in I WIL activities, Suhaeniyah joined Patuh Angen, a women's group concentrating on economic empowerment. These two things then made her capacity begin to increase. As a result, she was no longer insecure and hesitant to be actively involved in village activities. She was then trusted as the Secretary of the Patuh Angen Group. Later, Suhaeniyah was elected as the only female BPD (*Badan Pertimbangan Desa/Village Consultative Body*) member.

Her election proved very beneficial for women in the village regarding access to information and involvement in decision-making, including the village budget. The village government has begun to realise the need to allocate a budget for women's empowerment, especially in the economic sector.

In addition to being a BPD member, Suhaeniyah is also a paralegal. Her role in communicating with village officials in problem-solving has been well executed so far.

"It has been proven that the condition of the village is much better if women have easier access to resources in the village, especially related to economic empowerment because it ultimately leads to the welfare of the villagers in general," she said.



Marcelina Boymau.  
(Gama/Oxfam in  
Indonesia)

## Leading women's business groups

Women's leadership also takes place in the economic sphere. This can be seen in Marcelina Boymau, a resident of Oesena Village, Amarasi District, Kupang District, NTT.

Weaving expertise does not necessarily mean that Marcelina Boymau can get income quickly. She only started earning money from weaving after joining a weaving group in her village.

Like other weavers in her village, the woman who is usually called Mama Sherly said that in the past, weaving for her was a part-time job done in her spare time, for example, after the work period in the garden was over. The condition slowly changed when there was the formation of a weaving group facilitated by the TAS Consortium. In the formation of the group, weavers were gathered and given training. Her expertise and experience later led her to be chosen as the head of the Ainan Fen Women's Group.

There were some training she participated in during the I WIL programme, including financial management, administration, calculating the cost of production, label making and marketing. In addition, she also received training in women's leadership. This training was beneficial for her as the group leader. "After the weaving group's formation, many changes occurred. In terms of sales, we used to sell woven fabrics to make money, but now we receive training," she said.

This change has made her and the weavers more diligent so that weaving is no longer just a side or seasonal job. They became excited because they knew their woven products could be sold quickly. The amount of weaving production has also increased. In addition to the weavings produced by the group, there were also other woven fabrics from non-members that were sold by the makers to the group. This cannot be separated from the change in the pattern of selling woven products, which is now supported by a marketing strategy.

Mama Sherly led other group members to implement various ways to expand the market. These range from spreading product information by word of mouth to utilizing social media to target Kupang residents and other regions. In one month, they can sell up to 10 pieces of woven fabric.

The proceeds of the fabric sales are then given to the weavers whose products are sold. However, there is a deduction of Rp 5,000 for each piece of cloth sold to increase the group's cash. "The benefits are excellent. Because, on the other hand, we can help the family economy. We don't depend entirely on our husbands," she said.

As the group leader, Mama Sherly's future target is to attract girls who have dropped out of school to become weavers so that they can hone their skills while earning an income. They will be incorporated into the children's group. So far, four childrens have joined. They are tasked with making accessories made from woven patchwork, including necklaces and earrings. "We are now only working on necklaces and earrings. We hope there will be other derivative products that can be taught," she added.

## Women Leadership Pillar in Frame



Baiq Anggita, paralegal of Pagutan Village (NTB) is now having enough confidence to talk and lead a discussion. (Photo by Baskara Qazuaiini Karim)



Women leadership workshop has enabled women in NTT to speak up. (Gama/Oxfam in Indonesia)



Participants are discussing a topic as part of women leadership workshop in NTT. (Photo by Stefanus Kou)

# Strengthening Sustainability to Set the Next Step

Consider these facts for a moment. All nine villages in the I WIL project area in NTB have passed the Village Regulation (perdes) on Women & Children Protection. Those nine villages, plus 10 other villages in NTT, have SOPs for handling Gender-Based Violence elimination cases and a Village Head Decree on paralegals. Meanwhile, five of the 21 villages have committed to allocating village operational funds for paralegals and protecting women and children. These are not just numbers but an overview of how I WIL is paving the way to sustainability.

Sustainability is a jargon that haunts empowerment projects. Ensuring the sustainability of empowerment projects takes work. It takes a rugged design that continues to be monitored throughout the project; it takes extra energy, effort and commitment. However, that is the essence of empowerment, when the community that previously had to be assisted can finally be independent or become a reference for replication. And I WIL project prove that it can be realized.

One of the keys to I WIL's success is its comprehensive design through a three-pillar strategy, Gender-Based Violence elimination, Women Economic Empowerment and Women Leadership. Over five years, I WIL gradually targeted three change levels to build a sustainability foundation. Personal and community-level changes are encouraged by increasing awareness, understanding, capacity and implementation to gain commitment. The mechanism is expected to be system and policy changes only at the final level.

The Gender-Based Violence elimination pillar is considered the most complete in achieving these three levels. Although there have been many achievements in the Women Economic Empowerment and Women Leadership pillars, establishing formal systems and policies still needs further steps. Initiatives and groups that have grown in villages related to these two pillars need to be coordinated so that the vision is clear and aligned, such as proposals in the *musrenbangdes (Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan Desa-Village Development Planning Meeting)*.

The same applies to actors who can provide information to Women Economic Empowerment groups. With key actors and robust mechanisms and systems in place, the impact of these pillars will be more visible and widespread.

## Overcoming challenges

These achievements and the path to sustainability were challenging and uneasy. Communities in the I WIL areas have had strong roots for a long time regarding the position of women. Hence, gender inequality and women's empowerment are not at all favourite issues, let alone brought by outsiders. They don't even think there is a problem with the existing mindset and behaviour; those who try to change it are considered the problem.

"I remember very well in the first two years, our arrival was considered to be against tradition and religion, so we were about to be expelled during our activities and even accused of carrying a certain religious mission," said Muhammad Juaini, Coordinator of the ADARA Consortium.

However, because they believed they were bringing a change for the better, the programme team embraced the traditional and religious leaders instead of fighting endlessly. After a year-long gradual process, the results began to show in the third year. The situation reversed with more and more leaders changing their perspective

and supporting I WIL's mission. The issue of deep-rooted tradition was one of many challenges. The arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic at a time when internal consolidation was beginning to solidify tested the team's ability to strategise, anticipate, and maintain the mission. When social restrictions are imposed during a pandemic, it is not easy for anyone to run a community empowerment project. Moreover, the emergency also led to requests to reallocate funds to Covid-19 respond.

Not stopping there, Hurricane Seroja hit NTT in 2021, affected several project villages and generally made Oxfam partners postpone some activities because there was no electricity for more than two Women Economic Empowerment groups throughout Timor Island.

"I WIL partners for me are amazing. I learnt a lot from them. They are indeed experts. Understand what they are doing, especially when facing those challenges," said Susi Herawati, Project Manager of Oxfam in Indonesia's I WIL Programme.

## A more detailed assessment

In addition to those external challenges, internally within the programme implementers, some issues slowed down the achievement of targets. For example, apps

development for the online referral system was considered ineffective because it needed to be more compatible with the data system in the village. Meanwhile, a similar apps by the government was already integrated built from the village level to the national level, namely SIMFONI.

Following that finding, the strategy was immediately changed. Paralegals were trained in SIMFONI use, and the capacity of local government officials to manage it was strengthened. The result is a stronger foundation for the sustainability of the Gender-Based Violence Elimination pillar because of the mechanism built and connected from the village to the national level. Soon after paralegals could directly enter data into SIMFONI, cases number increased and impacted the government's decision to budget Special Allocation Funds for The Protection of Children and Women Technical Unit (UPTD PPA) in East Lombok and Central Lombok for handling Gender-Based Violence Elimination cases, for example, establishing safe houses.

As for the intervention and involvement of disability groups, although it is an extraordinary achievement beyond the target, it is recognised that if it is worked on together from the start, it can have a more significant impact.

## Sustainability and opportunities

Several crucial doors to sustainability have been opened by I WIL. *First*, there is a collaboration with other actors at local and national levels. For example, the Gender-Based Violence Elimination pillar with Indonesian Legal Aid (LBH), Ministry of Law and Human Rights, district governments, the local police, and other local actors including church, youth organization, and neighborhood unit. *Second*, the emergence of a formal policy as an umbrella for the Gender-Based Violence elimination movement so that it no longer depends on certain individual actors. And *third*, establishing relationships with providers of access to training, marketing, and funding in government and financial institutions.

Of course, I WIL is not intended, and is not realistic, to solve all gender inequality problems in NTB and NTT with five years duration. Many steps can still be taken to expand and strengthen the impact, not only in the 21 project villages. Oxfam identifies several follow-up interventions and implementing partner I WIL. It starts with developing a specific advocacy strategy for local NGOs, followed by a disability inclusion strategy. Then designing a project that involves more children and young people as subjects of Gender-Based Violence elimination prevention interventions.

## Inclusive business

Inclusive business model is a business managed by women from various backgrounds including survivors, persons with disabilities, young women and former women labor. In this business model, women connect with engaging business ecosystem government, private sector, universities and other supporting networks development and business processes. Inclusive business ecosystem delivers access to women to exploit local resources and control every part of the chain business value starting from input, production, process of manufacture, and marketing to consumers.

So far, Sukarara and Jurit Baru villages in NTB have started to become inclusive business pilots. After being strong in their core businesses of woven fabric and palm sugar, two women's groups in the village opened up. They built an ecosystem that is more open to the involvement of women outside the group. They are the Lumbung Sensek Weaving Group in Sukarara Village and the Critical and Creative Women's Group in Jurit Baru Village.

That is why in Jurit Baru, Kampung Aren emerged as the upstream and Warung KPKK on the Mount Kukus hiking trail as the downstream. Meanwhile, in Sukarara, the realisation of Lumbung Sensek Weaving Tourism was designed. This

inclusive business is the capital for the sustainability of the women's economic empowerment movement in I WIL areas because it allows more people to connect and support each other.

The model pioneered by these two villages will be encouraged in other villages in the I WIL areas. The business is based on the potential of the women from the resources in their village. The more parties involved in the business ecosystem built by women's groups in the village, the more comprehensive the economy rolls, and the stronger the foundation and support for its sustainability, such as support from the village government.

"The Sukarara village government is committed to providing approximately 25 acres of land for inclusive businesses. It will be the centre of all Lumbung Sensek activities, starting from the cotton planting process, planting natural dye trees, spinning yarn, weaving, and other activities related to weaving production. We also support in the form of capital assistance through Village Owned Enterprises (BUMDes)," said Zainal Rahman, Sukarara Village Secretary.

The I WIL project has indeed come to an end. However, while its legacy has proven to be strong in the community, there is still room and opportunity to continue working towards a greater goal: empowering Indonesian women to achieve equal rights and dignity.

# MESSAGES FROM PARTNERS



"I WIL's dedication provides important lessons for the ADARA Consortium, Gema Alam and LBH APIK NTB, partners in the village to district and provincial stakeholders. The inclusive approach in eliminating gender-based violence, women's economic empowerment, and increasing women's access and control in decision-making is more effective because of men's support. I WIL has also created two inclusive business villages: Sukarara Village, with weaving potential pioneered 'Weaving Ecotourism' and Jurit Baru Village, with palm potential, pioneered 'Kampung Aren'. Inclusive business villages allow women and people with disabilities to have direct access and control over the value chain, establishing a business ecosystem. Various achievements are combined for SDG's reporting. Five years have provided essential experiences in interaction. It is important to disseminate this experience for the broader benefit.

In mid-2023, the project ends. But good processes and achievements must not come to an end. To ensure this, the ADARA Consortium invites critical stakeholders to identify all achievements and develop sustainability strategies according to their respective capacities."

**Muhammad Juaini**

Coordinator of ADARA Consortium

“Efforts to support the government and social organizations in promoting the value of gender equality by reducing violence against women, strengthening women’s economy, and promoting women’s political participation in decision-making and leadership in eastern Indonesia through the I WIL project are Oxfam’s strategic steps that should be appreciated. For 5 years, Project I WIL has worked to change social and gender values that have not supported the realisation of equality, improve legal access services to women and girls and disability groups who are victims of violence. I WIL has also encouraged changes so that women have broad access to control resources and economic opportunities that increase household income, as well as increasing women’s representation in politics and leadership roles at the community and village levels. We hope that the I WIL project can be replicated in other regions.”



**Ansy Damaris Rihidara**

Coordinator of Timor Adil dan Setara (TAS) Consortium, NTT

“The I WIL project with its three pillar issues, namely eliminating gender-based violence, women’s economic empowerment and women’s leadership, has provided facts, data and information about the progress and struggle of women in ensuring their rights are fulfilled in development at the village level. The strategy of involving men in the implementation of the I WIL project is an appropriate strategy to create a more equal and just community life. The achievements of the I WIL project have also contributed to the achievement of the Village SDGs, especially in goals 1, 5 and 8. The achievements of the Village SDGs contribute greatly to the achievement of the National SDGs.”



**Listyowati**

Chief of Kalyanamitra, Jakarta

A woman wearing a pink hijab is holding a large bundle of dried palm fronds. The fronds are long and thin, and she is holding them with both hands. The background is a solid blue color.

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