



Envisage Women beyond ENVISION



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As a GEDSI Impact Report, this publication details the ENVISION project conducted by Wahana Visi Indonesia in East Sumba and Kupang Regencies over a three-year period from 2020 to 2023.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	iii
List of Abbreviations	iv
Acknowledgement	5
Wahana Visi Indonesia	5
Prolog project (Context and Objective)	6
Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Analysis based on World Vision's Five GEDSI Domains	
Systems	9
Access	10
Participation	11
Decision-Making	15
Well-being	16
Lesson Learned and Recommendations	17
Information is power	20
Leadership skills as a starter	20
Bolstering GEDSI uptake	21
Male-allies to avoid the backlash	21
Scaling-out and scaling up the approach	21
References	22

List of Abbreviations

Bengkel APPEK	<i>Advokasi Pemberdayaan dan Pengembangan Kampung</i> - a local CSO focuses on village development, community empowerment and advocacy
BUMDes	<i>Badan Usaha Milik Desa</i> - Village Enterprise Unit
CSOs	Civil society organizations
CVA	Citizen voice and action
ENVISION	Enabling Civil Society for Inclusive Village Economic Development
FGD	Focus group discussion
GEDSI	Gender equality, disability, and social inclusion
Musrenbang	<i>Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan</i> - Development Planning Consultation
NTT	Nusa Tenggara Timur
PWD	People with disability
SAKIP	<i>Sistem Akuntabilitas Kinerja Instansi Pemerintah</i> - web-based platform initiative by national government which reports, evaluates, and measures the government working performance at national and sub-national levels.
TTS	Timor Tengah Selatan
WVI	Wahana Visi Indonesia
WVUS	World Vision US
YAO	Yayasan Alpha Omega
YIS	Yayasan Injuwatu Sumba
YSSP	Yayasan Suara Sanggar Perempuan

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Wahana Visi Indonesia

A great dream is to see the establishment of economically independent villages supported by socio-cultural conditions that recognize the humanity of every citizen, including those from vulnerable and excluded groups. Women and young people are two of the groups that are expected to benefit from the welfare of economic self-sustainability in the village, so that dignity for all will be realized.

This report describes the impact of the ENVISION project in the five GEDSI domains of access, participation, decision-making, system change and well-being. Thank you to WVUS for the opportunity to make this report as a GEDSI Impact Report, an opportunity for WVI to present the impact of the programs we have carried out.

Prolog project (Context and Objective)

Gender equality is a long-term objective that requires collaborative efforts from numerous stakeholders. Despite all the progress of gender-related initiatives, the gender gap in power and leadership remains an important contributor to the persistent lag in gender equality.

Globally, women hold just 26.7% of parliamentary seats, 35.5% of local government seats and only 28.2% of management positions in the workplace.¹ Pro-gender equality proponents say that women belong in all places where decisions are being made, but more work needs to be done to increase women's participation in the public sector.

Indonesia, as an emerging economic powerhouse in Southeast Asia, has several policies related to increasing women's role in the public sphere. Instruction of the President of the Republic of Indonesia No.9/2009, concerning Gender Mainstreaming in the Development Program, aspires to increase the position, role and participation of women in the public sector. It also aims to achieve gender equality and justice in the family, community, nation, and state.

However, barriers to achieving gender equality and equity in Indonesia remain. Patriarchal culture influences social norms that control the everyday life of women and men in Indonesia, putting women in a more unfavourable situation, and leaving them behind in terms of political representation, public participation or corporate leadership.

Data from UN Women in 2024² indicated that work still needs to be done in Indonesia to achieve gender equality. As of February 2024, women held only 21.9% of the seats in parliament. Therefore, there is a growing need in Indonesia for gender-related initiatives that can boost women's participation in the public sphere, and ENVISION was one of these initiatives.

The ENVISION was a European Union funded project that aimed to improve governance and development processes in Indonesia regarding human rights and democratic principles. WV Indonesia implemented the project as the lead implementer along with non-government organization, Yayasan Alfa Omega (YAO)

1 <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2023-en.pdf>

2 <https://data.unwomen.org/country/indonesia#:~:text=Asia,related%20SDG%20commitments%20in%20Indonesia.>

as its sub-grantee. YAO then partnered with three small civil society organizations (CSOs) namely Yayasan Suara Sanggar Perempuan (YSSP) in Timor Tengah Selatan (TTS) District, Bengkel APPEK in Kupang District, and Yayasan Injuwatu Sumba (YIS) in Sumba Timur District.

The ENVISION project was implemented in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) province, one of the poorest provinces in Indonesia. NTT has a poverty rate of 21.09%, while the national rate is 9.41%. The high poverty rate in NTT province leads to consequences such as high unemployment and limited job opportunities (Holivil, 2024). The limited economic opportunity in NTT Province has encouraged women and youth to work outside their village, whether to the urban area or outside Indonesia (Usbobo, 2016). Women and young people from NTT have become trapped in a network of human trafficking, sometimes leading to death. The dire economic situation has been the focus of the national government, hence, the Government Regulation (PP) Number 11 of 2021 came to light.

The respective regulation underlay one of the ENVISION's core activities, which was to implement an alternative economic strengthening process through village-owned enterprises. The village-owned enterprises, coined as BUMDes, aim to improve the well-being of village communities through the management of village potential and village economic enterprises. In short, BUMDes support the village government in creating more economic opportunities for the village community.

Besides economic activity, the local government of NTT also focuses on improving government accountability. In 2019, the Ministry of Administrative Reform gave the province a score of 63.43³ out of 100 for Provincial Accountability Report (SAKIP), indicating weak planning, budgeting, performance reporting, and financial accountability systems. Therefore, efforts have been made to improve good governance in more than 3,000 villages across 22 districts/cities on this underserved island of Indonesia.

Aligned with the local government initiative, the ENVISION project promoted organizational transparency, accountability and inclusive development processes among government stakeholders and the local CSOs. Ultimately, while carrying out all of its activities, the ENVISION team promoted the involvement of women and youth in leadership in government organizations and BUMDes.

3 <https://1data.menpan.go.id/#>

Targeting 50 villages and 26,400 people, the ENVISION project focused on systemic poverty, mostly for women and youth across TTS, Kupang, and Sumba Timur districts. The project worked closely with the provincial, district, and village authorities, BUMDes, as well as CSOs, to enhance organizational capacity and participation in addressing these issues. The project duration was 42 months, from March 2020 to August 2023.



The major activities for the ENVISION project can be summarized as follows:



Identify, recruit, and train CSOs and BUMDes, as well as establish a working relationship between them so that CSOs, which represent the voices of the community, can meaningfully participate in BUMDes' planning to influence their decision making for the betterment of the community.



Conduct a gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) assessment. Train the target groups on GEDSI and appoint GEDSI champions, at least one from each CSOs. The GEDSI training would strengthen the skills of BUMDes to develop profitable business units that are inclusive of women and youth.



Train villagers on social accountability mechanisms - Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) - so they can monitor the performance of BUMDes's services.



Develop inter-departmental Task Force action plans to improve coordinated support for BUMDes and implementation of Village Funds.



Advocate to the district and provincial government regarding the need for new regulations on BUMDes emphasizing equality and inclusiveness.

Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Analysis based on World Vision's Five GEDSI Domains

The general gender situation in the ENVISION's locations is similar. All areas are rural settings where women are usually undervalued and not taken into consideration in the development process. Meanwhile, women do participate in village economic activities, covering agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries as well as traditional weaving skills. Therefore, supporting women by giving them access to participate in decision-making processes within CSOs and at the village and district level is a key step in changing the discriminatory systems. The ENVISION project employed the approach of recognizing and appreciating women's efforts to improve the well-being of their families and communities.

The result of an almost four-year intervention to improve the gender situation has shown promising trends. The details can be seen below, framed using World Vision's five domains of GEDSI .

Systems

A system that governs the behavior of a society can be both formal systems such as rules and regulations, as well as informal systems such as social norms. For formal systems, the project advocated for regulations to be inclusive to women, youth, people with disability, and other marginalized groups. Luckily, the Government of Indonesia has issued the Presidential Instruction No.9 of 2000 on gender mainstreaming in the national development process, highlighting the women's participation in the public sphere.

Additionally, there is Law No. 7 of 2017 on Elections which explicitly mandates a minimum representation of 30% women in the national and sub-national (province and district) legislature, thereby encouraging political parties to recruit female cadres who can stand as candidates in elections. As the election of executive and legislative members is held simultaneously at the national and subnational levels, political parties usually adhere to the Law No.7 on women's representation.

However, at the village level, the executive and legislative election mechanisms are slightly different because anyone can stand for election without being a member of a political party. This has led to the belief that there is no need for village level regulations that promote women's representation, or to set a target for the proportion of women in the local government. Despite this open system, social norms about the appropriate role of women still prevent many women from standing for election at the village level.

To address the issue, the ENVISION project has encouraged the village governments to adopt the Law No. 7 of 2017 at village level. Approximately 35 out of 50 villages, or 70% of the target villages assisted by the ENVISION program, established local rules for allocating 35% of positions to women and other vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities.

At the end of the program, 76% of BUMDes, 70% of village governments, and 40% of CSOs had regulations affirming a 35% quota for women and vulnerable groups. A remarkable exception was that women CSOs, who focused more on women's development, set the quota at 70% on average.

“ We decided to dedicate certain positions to women and certain positions to youth. The position of treasurer, for example,”
(Oemofa Village Head, Kupang)



Mentoring BUMDes officials on the documentation of financial transactions

Access

Ideally, there should be no barrier that prevents any group of people from accessing resources, opportunities, and services provided by the government. In the ENVISION project, access to information was crucial for women, youth and PWD so that they could grasp the progress of development planning in their villages.

The village governments have shared information with the public, including their accountability evaluation results (SAKIP) as well as their work plans and budget. The information was shared mainly through banners that they placed in their office. Despite the information being shared publicly, village governments fail to acknowledge that not everyone in the village has good literacy skills. So, the banners are just a performative action from the government for the sake of accountability. On top of that, some governments had also shared information digitally, such as through their websites. Digital sharing has not become mainstream since some villages were still experiencing disruption of internet access at a frequent rate.

One issue with this information sharing was that many people from the community did not possess the capability to understand the data. The information that they shared was meaningless to most of the public. So far, accountability and governance training were mostly focused on the village government members.

“*Supposedly there was no limitation (to accessing SAKIP documents), they must be accessible to everybody. However, sometimes the government treat the documents as a kind of secret that is not supposed to be seen by the people,”*

(FGD, WVI Staff)

Reflecting on this barrier, the ENVISION project recruited village facilitators to disseminate the information about BUMDes. The project equipped the village facilitators with training on how to explain and to share information with community members, including the vulnerable groups.

A female village facilitator, Lenci, described,

“*We gained some knowledge from the ENVISION program when we were trained to be village facilitators. At first we were confused about what to do, but this is the result of our perseverance. Now, three of us are the preeminent women in the village.”*

Participation

Women's representation in village institution leadership roles, including head, secretary, treasurer, and department heads, has significantly increased during the project. As the ENVISION project focused on BUMDes, women were engaged by the project through activities such as gender-sensitive livelihoods analysis, GEDSI awareness training, and the establishment of GEDSI champions, which aimed to increase the participation rate of women.

As a result, 42 BUMDes out of 50 BUMDes now include women in their managerial positions, compared to only 37 during the baseline three years ago. Overall, an estimated 40% of managerial positions in BUMDes were filled by women. This

achievement is considerably higher than the target of only 20% women participation as stated in the project's indicator, "By the end of the project, at least 75% of targeted BUMDes have 20% of women representation in BUMDes Management". Similarly, for youth CSOs, the overall participation of girls (across head, secretary, treasurer, and business unit heads) was not far behind BUMDes, at about 37%.

Kristina, the elected chairperson of the BUMDES in one village at East Sumba testified,

“ *I couldn't believe it that I am a woman and not a graduate but was selected as the Director of BUMDes in Musrenbang. I was assisted by a secretary and treasurer who were graduates from university. I would like to prove that if women are trusted, they will make capable leaders.”*



Kristina is presenting the result of discussion while attending one of the ENVISION training project.

Conversely, the village government leadership had a pretty low women participation rate at only about 20%. This low percentage is a gentle reminder for upcoming projects to continue to invest in women in leadership. Even though the ENVISION project did not have interventions at village government level, the efforts that the project did to increase women's participation in BUMDes were a start in moving forward to higher women's participation in other sectors.

It is also worth highlighting that the deeply ingrained gender roles contribute to the low participation of women outside the household. The dominant gender role for women in the villages was to take care of household chores. As that role became the priority for the women, sometimes they just opted to not participate in village development activities.

“*Most often, the activities were dominated by men as when the women attended, they usually went home early to prepare foods,*”

(Desperindagkop, Kupang)

Additionally, intersectionality does affect women's participation in the public sphere. It was evident in the ENVISION Evaluation Report as people from low social status were less favored than people from high social status. The effect multiplied in women from low social status as they are perceived as 'invisible', which then resulted in low participation in public activities.

Against all odds, the ENVISION project has planted the growing seed through its GEDSI champions across the three districts. The champions, which consisted of 32 men and 35 women, are the legacy of the ENVISION project which will continue the spirit of gender equality and social inclusion in their villages.

Decision-Making

Different results appeared in the three districts regarding the decision-making. Program participants in Kupang and TTS unanimously agreed that women in managerial positions had the same decision-making power as the men. This is supported by the fact that female leaders that emerged as a result of the ENVISION project could create more action plans that accommodated the needs of marginalized groups, especially women, than had previously been the case.

The situation was different in East Sumba. A small portion of the community claims there was unfair treatment of men and women. It was supported by the ongoing culture and caste system in East Sumba that affected the daily lives of Sumbanese people including restraining women's participation in the public sphere. Although women constitute the majority, men still dominate managerial positions in these institutions, so that when decisions are made regarding the needs of marginalized groups, decision-making largely depends on men.

Despite the small number of women leaders during the ENVISION project, these women leaders have proven that women can be the right decision-makers by prioritizing the interests of vulnerable groups. Women could accommodate the needs of the vulnerable groups as demonstrated by Yuliana, a woman leader from Kupang district. Yuliana, with her two colleagues, Selfiana and Lenci, advocated for youth weaving training in their village to create an economic opportunity for young people.

“*Even though our initiative to provide weaving training to youth in the village received backlash, we finally succeeded in convincing the village government to support us. The training was specifically aimed at educating young girls in the village, so that they can have the weaving skill and make money instead of working as female migrant workers that often return home with painful stories,*”

(Selfiana, women champion)



A male village facilitator was engaged in supporting women's empowerment in village economic with through facilitating traditional weaving enterprises at the village level.

Well-being

In the context of the ENVISION project, well-being can be described as an increase in the ability of individuals or institutions to gain trust or have abilities that are recognized by the community. The individual level emphasizes personal growth as an aspect of well-being. Various training programs were provided to the community throughout the project, which were expected to contribute to the self-improvement of the training participants. Increased community participation in village activities was the result of increased self-confidence, as they were equipped with sufficient knowledge to contribute meaningfully to the development process.

The GEDSI champions demonstrated clearer results, showing that they had gained an understanding of GEDSI mainstreaming and the importance of representing women and vulnerable groups in every village development planning activity or process, enabling them to become agents of change promoting gender equality and justice. In the quantitative endline study, it was found that almost all respondents stated that the training had a positive impact on them individually. With the new knowledge they gained, some of the GEDSI champions were able to take advantage of opportunities to advance their careers.

Lesson Learned and Recommendations

The ENVISION project laid a sound foundation for better governance through transparency and accountability and an inclusive and enabling environment in the targeted areas. It should also be noted that women were the ENVISION project's primary participants. A summary of impacts based on impact indicators utilized and established by the project is made available in the table below:

Indicators	Target	Result
Development Plan and Budget Prepared by the Government	30% Gender Equality	92% Gender Equality
Integrate Gender Equality and Social Inclusion	20% for Social inclusion	88% Social Inclusion for Youth 60% social inclusion for disabilities
Proposed Local Development Action Plans from the Community Members were Accommodated by the Government	50%	71.25%
Community Members Participation in Musrenbang ⁴	27% for Women 7.5% for Youth	40.10% for women 15.59% for youth
At the end of the project, 75% of targeted CSOs become GEDSI champions	75% or 38 people	134% or 67 people
Village Government Increased BUMDes Operation Budget Allocation by at Least 5%	25 Villages	30 Villages
By the end of the project, at least 75% of targeted BUMDes have 20% of women representation in BUMDes management team as suggested by GEDSI framework	35 BUMDes (70%)	42 BUMDes (84%)

The effective collaboration between WVI and the four local CSOs in NTT Province has demonstrated a better result as well. The ENVISION project is implemented at level where all village representatives discuss their village development planning and issues.

only to empower communities but also to share capacity with local organizations in each target area. This sharing initiative and cooperation with local organizations further sustains the positive changes beyond the project's duration.

Despite these achievements, the ENVISION project experienced a multitude of external challenges. The first was the COVID-19 pandemic, which rapidly spread within the first two weeks of ENVISION's contract. The second was Cyclone Seroja which hit NTT Province in April 2021, devastatingly affecting 1,993 households in all three targeted districts. Kupang District suffered a series of floods and climatic hazards.

The project team quickly adapted its programming to assist with the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic and cyclone. Specific examples include staff conducting door-to-door visits to disseminate BUMDes and to monitor GEDSI champions; integrating BUMDes meetings at the sub-district and district levels; and collaborating with district CSOs to align work plans. WVI's longevity in target areas also helped with emergency activities as WVI has gained trust among communities from previous long-term development projects. It had accelerated the needs assessment process and the distribution of emergency supplies. The EU Delegation in Jakarta was supportive as well and gave approval for the ENVISION project to respond to Cyclone Seroja from April to June 2021.

Meanwhile, there are identified barriers in five GEDSI domains as well that should be addressed should a similar intervention take place in the future. The barriers are as follows:



At the system level, local regulations in some villages affirm a 35% quota for women and vulnerable groups. However, some community members view that policy as non mandatory and disadvantageous. Additionally, patriarchal cultural norms further discourage participation by women and marginalized groups. Consequently, significant challenges persist in implementing the policy to achieve its intended outcomes.



Village and BUMDes budget information is typically shared via banners with figures but lacking detailed explanations, making it hard for communities to follow. The village government often omits narratives explaining the figures, assuming everyone understands them. Therefore, adding brief and concise explanations to banners might be a good start. Although the national government has launched a web-based SAKIP platform for government accountability, it is not effective in NTT Province due to limited internet access and unstable signals. Eventually, it is worth highlighting as well that these banners are inaccessible to visually impaired individuals, rendering inclusive access a challenge that should be addressed.



The participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities was a stellar achievement in this program, which was achieved through GEDSI Champions who promoted a 35% affirmative action policy for women and other vulnerable groups. Besides physical presence, women's participation was also evident in the election of village heads in areas with a strong traditional system, such as Sumba. While women's leadership was accepted, there is a need to elaborate further on intersectionality. There is not enough information on whether women' leaders must come from the higher class, given that Sumba still has a caste system ranging from upper caste - *Maramba* to lower caste - *Ata*.

Some recommendations that could be used in further programming are as follows:

Information is power

This might not be the case for both men and women who are resourceful and not facing limitations in accessing their rights. However, a stark contrast was found in the assisted villages of ENVISION. Geographical constraints, low to medium literacy levels, and exclusion from the community, especially for marginalized people render information as something rare and valuable for local communities in the 50 assisted villages of ENVISION. Remarkably, when the local women gained the necessary information regarding the village planning development, they exercised their agency in utilizing the information for the greater good of the community.

The notable example was the weaving training for youth in Kupang district. The GEDSI champions there advocated weaving training through BUMDes so that the young women could have an income without having to work as migrant workers or leaving the village. This effort was in response to the high number of cases of violence against migrant workers from NTT Province.

Women and youth have been able to access this information, but it is equally important that this information be accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities, encouraging them to participate in community discussions decision-making at the village level.

Leadership skills as a starter

Leadership is an important skill that can boost women's confidence in decision-making and well-being. Although not many women are in the top positions of leadership structure, such as the head of village or the director of BUMDes, the number of women who gained increased leadership skills via the ENVISION project exceeded the target. Many women voiced their experience in the ENVISION book 'Developing the Nation from Villages; BUMDes Challenges and Struggles from the Land of Timor and Sumba' enthusiastically. It became a gentle reminder to continue to invest in women and girls with appropriate skills and training. ENVISION suggested that leadership training could be used as one option to increase women's visibility in the public sector.

Bolstering GEDSI uptake

WVI should build on the ENVISION project momentum to expand GEDSI awareness, leveraging the support of existing GEDSI champions. This will enhance champions' skills in applying their knowledge while spreading GEDSI principles to new communities. Scaling this champion network is essential for embedding the concept of women as leaders, as systemic change requires time. For maximum impact, WVI could implement these efforts at the grassroots level with direct support and involvement from local governments.

Male-allies to avoid the backlash

Oftentimes, gender equality is closely associated with women's empowerment and is women-focused only, leaving men excluded. Meanwhile, not all men benefit from the traditional gender roles. The ENVISION project is aware of this concealed fact. Hence, ENVISION advocated for both men and women to be the GEDSI Champion. ENVISION had 67 GEDSI champions until the end of the project which consisted of 32 men and 35 women. This balance is important to ensure the sustainability of the GEDSI aspect and most importantly, to avoid potential backlash that can emerge from women-only GEDSI-related interventions.

Scaling-out and scaling up the approach

There are 22 districts/cities in NTT Province and only 13% were exposed to the ENVISION's intervention. The possibility of replicating the ENVISION project is highly likely both at horizontal and vertical level.

Using the GEDSI champions and the support of the local CSOs, scaling the activity in neighbouring villages or sub-district would be viable. Meanwhile, scaling up requires more coordinated efforts and high-level meetings to ensure provincial or national governments commitment to implementing the ENVISION approach in large scale initiatives such as provincial programs or national programs.

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