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ODE BRIEF
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The Empowering Indonesian Women for Poverty Reduction Program (MAMPU):
Lessons for policy influence and gender equality

The Empowering Indonesian Women for Poverty Reduction Program (MAMPU) aims to improve the lives of poor women in Indonesia. It currently operates in 27 Indonesian provinces, reaching more than 750 districts and 2,390 villages.

Phase 1 of the program (2012–2016) is nearing completion and, to prepare for Phase 2, an evaluation was undertaken. This evaluation was conducted in two parts. First, MAMPU's managing contractor and national partners conducted an internal evaluation and produced a Performance Story, which outlines the program's achievements to date. Second, an independent evaluation team assessed these documents to verify that they were based on evidence and reflected the views of MAMPU stakeholders. The independent team's findings were provided in a Verification Report.

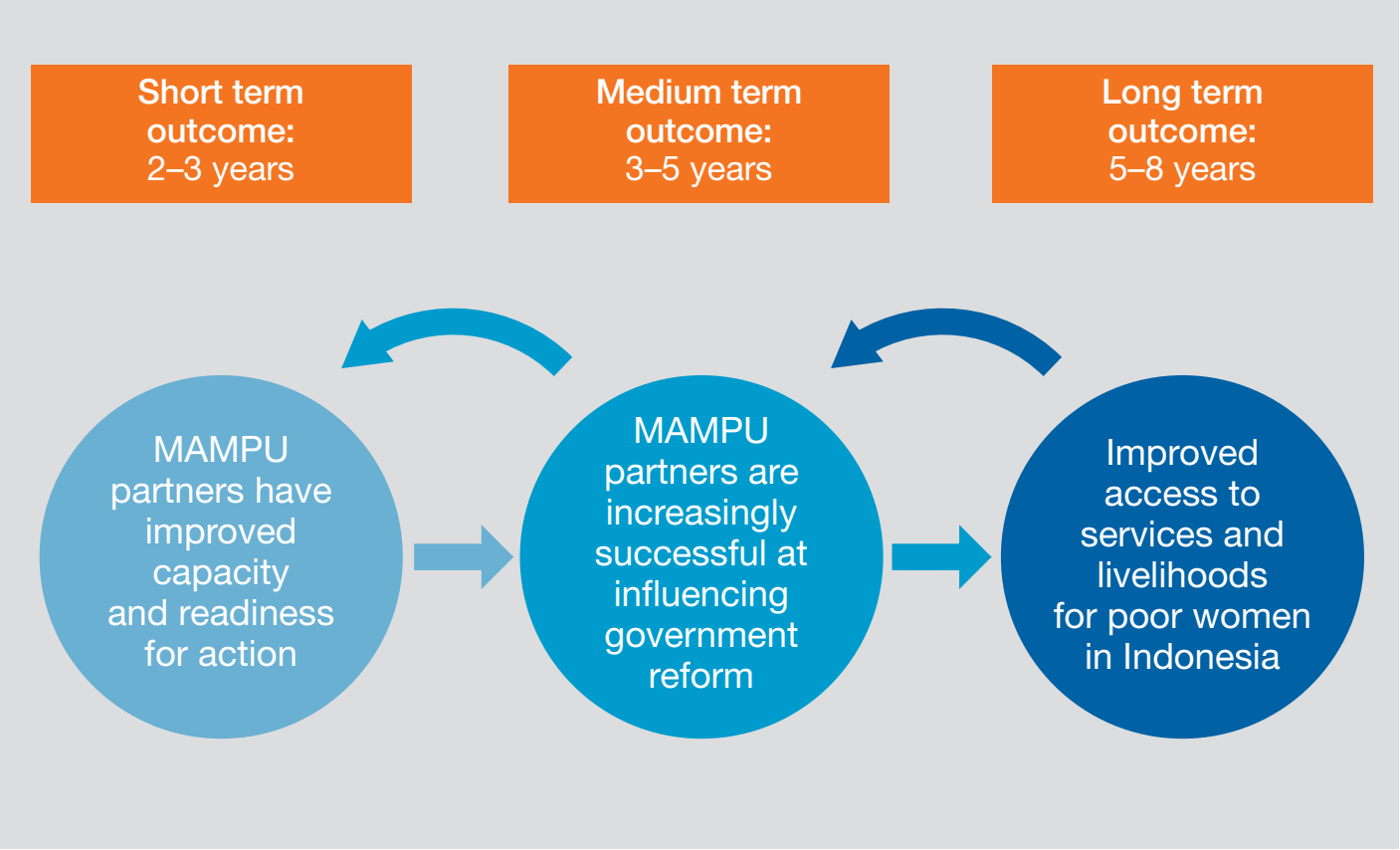
The two part evaluation builds on the strengths of internal and external perspectives. The internal team (the managing contractor and national partners) have a strong understanding of the program and the most to learn from conducting an evaluation. The external team, which was composed of independent, objective outsiders including an ODE staff member, was well placed to assess the accuracy and evidence-based nature of the internal team's findings.

Findings from the Performance Story and Verification Report

MAMPU is based on a simple idea: that if strong gender-interested organisations can influence key government policies, the lives of poor women in Indonesia will be improved. MAMPU works with ten national organisations and their partners, mainly from civil society, to assist them to form coalitions and advocate for policy change.

Figure 1 provides a summary of MAMPU's theory of change.

Figure 1: MAMPU's theory of change



The MAMPU Performance Story concludes that the program has made good progress against its theory of change, as discussed below. Based on the verification process, the independent evaluation team supports the findings in the Performance Story, judging that they are based on multiple sources of evidence and are consistent with the views of MAMPU stakeholders.

MAMPU's achievements

- **Short-term outcome:** Due to training and incentives provided by MAMPU, partners demonstrate improved capacity to influence government reform. Partners have, for example, better internal decision making, improved financial management capacity and expanded networks.
- **Medium-term outcome:** Using their improved capacity and networks, MAMPU partners have influenced government policy. Lobbying by one partner, Migrant Care, helped ensure a national law on the protection of migrant workers became a priority on Indonesia's National Legislative Agenda. Women at the village level are also better able to voice their priorities and influence decision-making at local levels.
- **Long-term outcome:** There are early indications that MAMPU is contributing to improved services for poor women. Due to the program, MAMPU partner 'Aisyiyah has screened more than 3,700 women for cervical cancer. Local governments have also responded favourably to priorities put forward by local women. On the island of Pangkep in South Sulawesi, lobbying by local women led the district government to repair the island's docks. This will ensure the local community can access services on the mainland.

The independent verification team also identified areas where MAMPU could improve. For example:

- A formal performance review system should be developed so that all MAMPU partners (Cowater, its sub-contractors, and MAMPU national partners) receive feedback on their performance
- Methods for evaluating the program's value for money should be developed and value for money assessments should be included in future reporting
- The program should increase its focus on people with disability, and
- A structured process to facilitate engagement between national partners and the Indonesian Government should be developed.



Due to MAMPU women at the village level are better able to voice their priorities. With support from MAMPU partners, women in Central Java are improving their livelihoods. Photo: Farida Fleming, 2015.

Lessons from MAMPU

The MAMPU evaluation process identified five key lessons for those interested in gender equality and policy influencing programs, as discussed below. They are based on evidence synthesised from the MAMPU Performance Story and the Verification Report.

Progress can be unpredictable

The Performance Story notes that although MAMPU partners have experienced success in influencing government reform, there are examples where results were less positive. The National Commission on Violence Against Women (KOMNAS Perempuan), for example, was not successful in its attempt to place a proposed law on sexual violence on the national parliament's legislative agenda. Such setbacks highlight that working in the policy influence space is unpredictable and that a long-term commitment is required to achieve results.

Networks boost the potential for success

For those policy reform efforts that were successful two points stand out. The first is the importance of networks. Because of the program's support, MAMPU partners at the national level have been able to build better networks with organisations working at provincial and district levels. This assisted policy influence by ensuring all network partners could draw on each other's data, providing them with a wider range of evidence to influence government. Network partners could also work together to simultaneously influence national and sub-national government policies. This increases the chances of policy change taking place to improve poor women's lives.

Different paths, same destination

The second point to note is that the successful examples all unfolded with slightly different trajectories. Migrant Care ran a long-term, politically astute campaign, engaging with parliamentarians and the media, to lobby for the national law on migrant workers to be placed before the National Parliament. If the legislation is passed there could be significant benefits for Indonesian migrant workers, an estimated 65-70% of whom are women. Another MAMPU partner, PEKKA, took a different approach. They chose to work with reform-minded officials in the Indonesian bureaucracy to overcome technical constraints to women's access to social protection. At the grassroots level, services were improved via two pathways: MAMPU partners facilitated direct engagement between village women and local government, and MAMPU partners worked directly with local governments. These different pathways demonstrate the importance of partners being flexible and 'thinking and working politically' to seize opportunities as they arise.[1]

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Assisting partners to work politically

Further, programs such as MAMPU can add value by helping partners become more adept at 'thinking and working politically'. A number of national partners, as well as the Indonesian Government, highlighted they would like assistance to build mutually beneficial relationships between government and civil society networks. MAMPU partners suggested they would benefit from guidance on how to build connections with national government, for example advice on who they should meet and when in order to influence policy. The Indonesian Government also noted they would benefit from additional assistance to coordinate with MAMPU partners. Assisting partners to be flexible and to build relationships can therefore be an important role for programs such as MAMPU.

The importance of working with individuals and groups

A further lesson relates to the role of programs like MAMPU in increasing the influence of women at the village level. The original intent of MAMPU was to build the capacity of national and sub-national partners to influence government policy. However, in practice many MAMPU partners have worked closely with women at the village level to build their capacity to voice their priorities and concerns. As program implementation has progressed it has become apparent that facilitating engagement between such women and their local governments has resulted in policy changes which have improved women's lives (as highlighted in Nurlina's story below). The next phase of MAMPU will therefore focus much more explicitly on empowering women at the village level and enabling them to influence local government policy.[2]

1 ODE's evaluation *Thinking and working politically: An evaluation of policy dialogue in AusAID* (2013) provides further information on thinking and working politically. See http://dfat.gov.au/aid/how-we-measure-performance/ode/odepublications/Pages/policy-dialogue.aspx

2 ODE's evaluation *Working beyond government: An evaluation of AusAID's engagement with civil society in developing countries* (2012) provides further information on the importance of working with both individuals and groups. See http://dfat.gov.au/aid/how-we-measure-performance/ode/odepublications/Pages/working-beyond-government.aspx

Nurlina — a story of change achieved through MAMPU

Nurlina lives with her mother on the small island of Sabangko, just off the coast of Sulawesi. She earns her livelihood by selling fish, collecting seaweed and sewing crab nets. Nurlina's mother is ill and a widow, which means Nurlina must work hard to support both herself and her mother.

As the female head of a poor family, and because of her boyish looks, Nurlina was mocked by others. As a result, she used to be shy and lacked self-confidence. But Nurlina's situation has improved ever since she was introduced to the Gender Watch program, which is implemented by one of MAMPU's partners.

Nurlina was invited to attend a school for women (Sekolah Perempuan), a Gender Watch initiative, where she and other women took part in an education equality program. As a result of what she was learning at school, Nurlina's self-confidence grew and she began to participate more actively in class. She was eventually chosen to take part in the first women's leadership and social protection training program, where she learned, for the first time, that men and women have equal rights.

The realisation that women have the same rights as men gave Nurlina the self-confidence she needed to demand the right to be leased a boat from a government-sponsored boat rental program that had previously leased boats exclusively to men.

Before she attended the school for women, Nurlina lacked the courage to insist on being allowed to lease a boat. But thanks to the training she received through the school, Nurlina learned how to speak up. She asked the government agency responsible for the boat rentals, "Why won't you let me borrow a boat just because I am a woman? I am indeed a woman but I can drive the boat. You don't believe me? Let me take you on a tour around the island on a boat!"

Nurlina now has her own leased boat. Others no longer consider her weak since she showed the courage to speak up. Nurlina is now the one who is sent to attend meetings in the villages on her island of Sabangko. For example, she was responsible for gaining village government approval to bring integrated health services to Sabangko.



Women from Pangkep district, South Sulawesi, worked with the local government to improve dock facilities and to ensure women can rent government-owned fishing boats. Photo: Farida Fleming, 2015

The Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) is an independent branch within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The full evaluation report and the management response to it can be accessed at www.ode.dfat.gov.au.