

Muslim Philanthropic Organization, Ecofeminism and Its Contribution to Sustainable Development in Banten, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT This study explores the role and activities of Lembaga Amil Zakat Harapan Dhuafa (LAZ Harfa) in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Banten Province through the lens of ecofeminism. This study highlights the importance of women's active participation in sustainable development, using qualitative methods with ethnomethodology and autobiographical approaches. Data were collected through program observations, interviews with LAZ Harfa managers, and autobiographical narratives from empowerment facilitators. The findings show that the dominant top-down approach in SDGs programs by the government often does not integrate the various goals effectively. In contrast, LAZ Harfa's approach, grounded in the principles of ecofeminism, actively involves women in environmental empowerment and management. This approach not only supports gender equality, but also contributes significantly to other sustainable development goals. Local women's knowledge and experience are key to the success of empowerment and sustainable development initiatives in the region.

KEYWORDS *Ecofeminism; Sustainable Development Goals; LAZ Harfa; Women Empowerment; Environmental Management*

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development aims to improve the quality of human life while maintaining the sustainability of the earth. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a comprehensive framework adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, aiming to address various global challenges such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. The 17 SDGs consist of 169 targets designed to guide nations in achieving a sustainable future through economic development, social inclusiveness, and environmental protection (ElAlfy et al., 2021; Megawati

et al., 2024) The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Indonesia represents a critical effort by the government to harmonize national development objectives with global sustainability standards. Adopting the SDGs through Presidential Regulation No. 59/2017 underscores Indonesia's commitment to achieving significant socio-economic and environmental targets by 2030 (Agus et al., 2020) Given Indonesia's diverse geography and demographic patterns, the SDGs provide a structured approach to address local challenges while contributing to global sustainability efforts.

One of the pivotal aspects of SDG implementation in Indonesia involves promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth. This encompasses efforts to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities, particularly in rural areas where a significant portion of the population resides, making it essential for local governments to integrate SDGs into village development plans (Nugroho et al., 2022; Sugandi et al., 2023). Research highlights that such grassroots initiatives are vital, as approximately 43% of the Indonesian population lives in villages, emphasizing the need for targeted programs that address unique local needs within the SDG framework (Nugroho et al., 2022).

Banten Province showed a significant increase in the achievement of sustainable development indicators from 2012 to the projection of 2030. The province obtained a score of C, which is above the national average. This improvement is particularly evident in the issues of gender equality and access to clean water and sanitation. Data from the Ministry of Women and Child Protection (Republik, 2020) also shows that the Gender Development Index (IDG) and Gender Empowerment Index (IPG) in Banten are high. This shows an improvement in aspects of gender equality until 2020. However, in the midst of these achievements, various philanthropic institutions or Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) have emerged that show the dissatisfaction of the community with the role and policies of the government. These organizations are trying to make up for the shortcomings of the government's agenda, especially in women's and environmental issues. One of

the NGOs active in this field is Lembaga Amil Zakat Harapan Dhuafa (LAZ-Harfa) in Banten Alisjahbana (Alisjahbana et al., 2018).

Ecofeminism by Mies and Shiva was the first publication to analyse the relationship between capitalist destruction of nature and patriarchal oppression, from a unique North-South perspective (Shiva & Mies, 2014). The authors attest that 'the economic, social and ecological costs of unending growth and profit in industrialised countries have been shifted to colonised countries of the South. Shiva & Mies (2014) argue that the capitalist and patriarchal oppression of women is mirrored in the exploitation of natural resources. They contend that industrial growth in developed nations has led to environmental destruction, the consequences of which are often borne by marginalized populations, especially women in developing countries who rely on natural resources for their livelihoods (Boote & Lotfi, 2023). This "shifting of costs" highlights a dynamic where the benefits of industrial progress are concentrated in the Global North, while ecological and social burdens are offloaded onto the Global South—regions that often struggle with poverty and inequality (Boote & Lotfi, 2023). Mies and Shiva (Priyatna, 2017) suggest that the relationship between feminism and the environment is inseparable from the situation and position of women and nature, which are always oppressed by patriarchal forces. Like feminism, the environment is often considered as 'the other' that needs to be controlled and exploited. The myth of "Dewi Sri" in Sundanese culture, for example, depicts women as the origin of rice, suggesting women's role in fulfilling

human needs, similar to that of nature itself. In addition, the term “Mother Earth” is often used to symbolize the homeland as a female figure.

The connection between nature and women was first proposed by Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974 through her essay “Le Feminisme ou la Mort” (Feminism or Death) as the terminology of ecofeminism (Priyatna et al., 2017). Warren (Warren, 1997) categorizes ecofeminism in environmental ethics as a radical ecological paradigm that blurs the boundaries between humans and nature. Arivia (2002) states that ecofeminism sees the position of women and nature as an ‘other’ that can be exploited. Ecofeminism fights to defend the rights of nature and women, against patriarchal domination that places both as objects of exploitation. Building on this perspective, NGOs such as LAZ-Harfa embody ecofeminist principles by integrating environmental sustainability with community development, particularly in empowering marginalized women.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) play a vital role in empowering communities through ecofeminism by fostering sustainable development while addressing gender inequality and environmental degradation. This empowerment hinges on several key strategies that combine local knowledge, community engagement, and focused interventions to promote both ecological sustainability and social equity. NGOs can leverage local wisdom and resources to enhance community skills and capabilities. For instance, the Spedagi NGO illustrates how community empowerment initiatives

can be successful when they incorporate local cultural resources, providing economic opportunities that align with sustainable practices (Rahmawati & Astuti, 2019). By facilitating activities such as the Papringan Market, NGOs can help local farmers and producers improve their economic viability while emphasizing sustainable agricultural practices, which are integral to the ecofeminist framework. Moreover, engaging female community members is fundamental in ecofeminism, as women often hold key roles in managing resources within their households and communities. Programs focused on training women in sustainable agricultural practices can amplify their contribution to both community empowerment and environmental stewardship (Imran et al., 2021)

In Banten Province, there are various NGOs engaged in the social and humanitarian fields, both on an international, national and local scale. LAZ-Harfa is in the spotlight for its programs that focus on the people-centered development paradigm. Nur (2021) it is known that the values culture in Indonesia tends to be ecocentric and biocentric, so it can be said to be a deep ecology (ecology that is deep / concentrated explains that this paradigm views people not only as objects, but as subjects of development who have the power to manage resources in their environment. The empowerment method used by LAZ Harfa is the ABCD (Asset Based Community Development) method, which focuses on community development based on local resources. In the implementation of its empowerment program, LAZ Harfa acts as a facilitator and the implementation

is carried out over a fairly long period of time, at least three months. The duration of this process aims to achieve community independence through changes in mindset and perspective in facing and solving problems in a sustainable manner. This empowerment also involves a lot of women, both in the sustainability of the natural environment and economic empowerment. The contribution of this institution is not only as a distributor of *zakat*, *infaq*, and alms, but also in changing the mindset of the community to improve their quality of life. The empowerment process aims to improve the quality of self, economy, and environmental sustainability, with women as the main subject of development in the area.

Literature Review

Ecofeminism as a theoretical framework was notably advanced by Mies and Shiva in their seminal work, "Ecofeminism" (1993), which articulates the foundational tenet that the oppression of women and nature arises from patriarchal capitalist systems. This perspective posits that systems of domination—whether over women or the environment—are interconnected, necessitating a collective understanding and response "Indian Feminist Ecocriticism" (Vakoch, 2022). The development of ecofeminism in the Global South, particularly as documented by scholars like Pandey, emphasizes the unique challenges faced by women in regions impacted by globalization and environmental degradation (Pandey, 2013) Shiva conducted empirical research on people who living around forest areas in India obtained the conclusion women bear a greater negative impact due to

forest destruction. Women are a group that is more at risk and have the potential to experience more severe suffering as a result of forest destruction than men. Women are most vulnerable and marginalised by forest destruction. The dependence of women who live around forest area to nature is very strong, so forest destruction has a big impact on the fate of women. Women whose whose lives depend more on forest products will suffer even more suffer.

The subsistence perspective, which has inspired various ecological and feminist grassroots movements, is a critique of aggressive, exploitative, and ecologically destructive technology and commodity-producing capitalist or socialist industrial systems. These movements reject the universal supermarket as a model for a better society, even if it is equally accessible to all. They differ in their concept of a "good life" and freedom, as well as their economics, politics, and culture. The main characteristics of this subsistence perspective include the need for a new vision, which focuses on the creation and re-creation of life, focusing on self-provisioning, self-sufficiency, regionality, and decentralization from a state bureaucracy. Local and regional resources are used but not exploited, and the market plays a subordinate role (Shiva & Mies, 2014).

Economic activities are based on new relationships, including respect for nature and human relationships, particularly between women and men. A different, non-exploitative relationship to nature cannot be established without a change in human relationships, particularly between

women and men. This means changing divisions of labor, substituting money or commodity relationships with principles such as reciprocity, mutuality, solidarity, reliability, sharing and caring, respect for the individual, and responsibility for the whole (Shiva & Mies, 2014). A subsistence perspective promotes participatory or grassroots democracy, allowing for political responsibility and action to be assumed by all in a communal and practical way. It requires a multidimensional or synergic problem-solving approach, acknowledging that social problems must be solved together with ecological problems. Lastly, a subsistence perspective demands a new paradigm of science, technology, and knowledge. Instead of instrumentalist, reductionist science and technology based on dualistic dichotomies, ecologically sound, feminist, subsistence science and technology should be developed through participatory action with the people. This grass-roots, women, and people-based knowledge and science will lead to a re-evaluation of older survival wisdom and traditions, while also utilizing modern knowledge to maintain control over technology and survival bases. Social relations are not external to technology but rather incorporated into the artifacts as such.

Some studies that explore the role of women and their engagement with nature. Priyatna et al., (2017) in the article *Ekofeminisme dan Gerakan Perempuan di Bandung* examined the role of women as housewives who became environmental activists. This research highlights how the activities of three women activists contribute to environmental sustainability through the ecofeminism movement.

Another study by Astuti (2012) entitled *Ekofeminisme dan Peran Perempuan dalam Lingkungan* highlights how women play a role in environmental conservation. Supriatna and Maulana (2017) in the article *Ekofeminisme: Perempuan, Alam, Perlawanan atas Kuasa Patriarki dan Pembangunan Dunia Wangari Maathai dan Green Belt Movement 1990-2004* describes women's struggle against patriarchy through the nature conservation movement. Luh et al. (2019) discussed the influence of Dewi Candraningrum's ecofeminism thinking on the Kendeng community movement against the construction of a cement factory. Some studies also examine ecofeminism in literary works, such as those conducted by Fatimah (2017), Solichin (2018), and Nuraeni et al., (2019) they examined the roles and movements of women in novels that focus on environmental conservation.

Research on the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in relation to the SDGs is still limited. Kurniawan (2012) in *(Wacana Lingkungan dan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan dalam Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat di Indonesia)* emphasized the importance of not dichotomizing environmental issues and emphasizing the relationship between the two. Brockington and Igoe (Kurniawan, 2012) also emphasize the importance of considering the relationship between nature and humans in environmental and development solutions.

The principles of ABCD stem from a recognition that communities possess inherent strengths, including relationships, skills, and local knowledge that can drive development. This asset-centric view contrasts with traditional deficit-based

models that focus primarily on community needs (Rosyidah et al., 2024) on women's art collective eco-artivism illustrates how engaging community members in ecological initiatives harnesses local skills and perspectives, further integrating ecofeminist values into community development (Rosyidah et al., 2024) Ecofeminism, as discussed by Mies and Shiva, inherently aligns with the ABCD framework by emphasizing the role of local knowledge and the agency of women in sustainable practices. The integration of ecofeminist principles within community development can help cultivate sustainable attitudes and resilience. For example, Saiful and Setyorini advocate for the incorporation of ecofeminism in teacher education to foster sustainable practices among future educators, thereby empowering communities through informed pedagogical approaches (Saiful & Setyorini, 2022) This educational emphasis reflects an understanding that capacity building in environmental and gender consciousness can significantly contribute to the community's overall empowerment.

The principles of ABCD highlight the significance of community participation in sustainability efforts. Mies and Shiva's perspective on ecofeminism articulates that recognizing the agency of women and local communities can lead to more equitable and sustainable environmental practices. The community's involvement in decision-making processes often yields better outcomes, as seen in studies involving women environmental cadres who actively participate in environmental movements within their localities (Khurun'in & Subekti, 2020) This approach supports the notion

that when communities are equipped to utilize their assets effectively, they foster both ecological health and gender equity.

Significant contributions to the ecofeminist discourse emerge from educational initiatives aimed at enhancing sustainability attitudes. Research by Sanz and Ezpeleta demonstrates how ecofeminism can serve as a foundational tool in educational settings, contributing to a more profound understanding of sustainability among pre-service teachers. The findings indicate that fostering ecofeminist principles in education not only raises awareness but also promotes active community engagement in sustainability practices (Sanz & Ezpeleta, 2021). These insights further reinforce the ABCD framework's focus on leveraging local educational capacities to empower communities.

Despite the positive aspects of implementing ABCD and ecofeminist strategies, challenges persist, particularly regarding inclusivity and intersectionality. As Frank et al. assert, the intersection of sustainability and gender perspectives is vital but often overlooked, which can hinder the effectiveness of community development initiatives (Frank et al., 2024). Addressing these challenges requires an understanding of diverse community identities and contexts, as articulated by authors like Njoh and Ayuk-Etang, who analyze the determinants of ecofeminism within specific cultural and political contexts (Njoh & Ayuk-Etang, 2020) This highlights the necessity for inclusive strategies that account for varying community dynamics in both ecofeminism and ABCD approaches.

Some of these previous studies are certainly different from this paper, in that this paper focuses on the local context, specific to Banten Province and the programs run by LAZ Harfa. In addition, this paper looks more at a practical approach by highlighting the ABCD (Asset Based Community Development) method and its practical implementation, highlighting the institutional role of NGOs in sustainable development, and focusing on the role of women in environmental sustainability and economic empowerment through a cultural studies approach.

Barker (2016) cites Bennet in defining cultural studies as an interdisciplinary field that borrows perspectives from various disciplines to examine the relationship between culture and politics. Ecofeminism, as part of cultural studies, combines ecology and feminism. Ecology examines the relationship between living things in ecosystems, while feminism highlights male domination over women. Ritzer & Smart (2014) cites Simone de Beauvoir in "The Second Sex" which states that the world is constructed based on male experience, placing women as "the other."

Dorothy E. Smith (Smith, 1990) in "The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge" emphasizes the importance of fighting for the presence of women's experiences in the public sphere. Smith also introduced the concept of Bifurcation of Consciousness, which emphasizes the importance of involving women's knowledge and experience in public policy. Anthropocentric environmental management often places nature as an object that can be exploited. Capra (1997) and Hughes (2000) state that this view causes failure in

sustainable development. Abdoellah (2017) adds that anthropocentrism makes humans homo economicus, which judges everything based on economic prosperity.

Ecofeminism links the concepts of ecology and feminism. According to Warren (Priyatna et al., 2017), ecofeminism is a philosophy that encompasses various approaches to feminism and the environment. Arivia (2002) cites Rosemary Tong who identifies several schools of thought of ecofeminism, including Daly (1990) view that rejects male culture and Scheppele & Griffin (1980) view that equates women with nature. Starhawk's spiritual ecofeminist views emphasize immanence, connectedness, and a sentient way of life. Vandana & Mies (2014) emphasize that patriarchal capitalism breeds exploitation of women and nature.

The human-centered development paradigm aims to empower people to be independent. Ife (1995) states that empowerment is the process of helping disadvantaged groups to compete more effectively with other interests. Suharto (2009) adds that community empowerment is a new paradigm in development that is participatory, empowering, and sustainable. Based on this theoretical study, it can be said that by involving women's knowledge and experience, empowerment activities can be the key to the success of the sustainable development agenda, especially in achieving gender equality and natural sustainability. The active involvement of women in planning, policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation are important factors in achieving holistic development goals.

Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach through an in-depth case study, focusing on the lived experiences and perspectives of women involved in eco-artivism as a form of community empowerment (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The methodology emphasizes semi-structured interviews to gather rich, contextual data from participants directly engaged in initiatives that align ecofeminist principles with artistic expression and environmental activism. Participant selection is purposive, targeting individuals who are actively involved in women's collectives, local environmental movements, or community-based art projects. This ensures that the voices of women, who often face compounded marginalization in both ecological and artistic spaces, are central to the research narrative. The qualitative nature of the study allows for an exploration of nuanced experiences, providing insight into how ecofeminism empowers women by redefining their relationships with nature and their communities.

Data collection involves conducting in-depth interviews that facilitate open dialogue and encourage participants to share their stories, motivations, and challenges. The interview questions are designed to stimulate reflection on personal experiences with ecofeminism and environmental activism, as well as their thoughts on community dynamics and artistic initiatives. This methodological framework supports an analysis of themes related to empowerment, identity, and ecological responsibility, enabling a comprehensive understanding of

how these women perceive their roles and contributions to sustainable practices. The thematic analysis following the interviews will identify key patterns and insights that emerge from the participants' narratives, further elucidating the intersection of ecofeminism and community empowerment within the context of local environmental activism.

DISCUSSION

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by involving various parties such as government agencies, academics, civil society organizations (CSOs), philanthropic institutions, and businesses, and supported by parliament. This seriousness is reflected in Banten Governor Regulation No. 47/2019 on the 2020–2022 SDGs Regional Action Plan, which provides a framework for strategies and concrete steps to achieve sustainable development targets in the region. The plan covers issues ranging from poverty reduction, education quality improvement, access to clean water and sanitation, to gender equality, with key indicators to measure progress.

Collaboration between various stakeholders is crucial in this endeavor. Academics contribute through evidence-based research, CSOs and philanthropic institutions implement programs on the ground, while the private sector implements sustainable business practices. Parliament also plays an important role in legislation and policy oversight. Through synergistic and sustainable cooperation, Banten Province is expected to become a successful example of SDG implementation in Indonesia, providing

significant benefits to society, and ensuring that all parties play an optimal role in achieving sustainable development.

Gender Development Index (HDI) and Gender Empowerment Index (IDG) of Banten Province

Gender is a multidimensional issue that is included in almost all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Evaluation of development results with a gender perspective uses two main indicators, namely the Gender Development Index (HDI) and the Gender Empowerment Index (IDG). The HDI is a comparison between the Human Development Index (HDI) of men and the HDI of women, seen from the quality of education, health, and economic dimensions. The education dimension is measured through expected years of schooling and average years of schooling, the health dimension is measured through life expectancy, and the economic dimension is measured through adjusted per capita expenditure.

In 2020, the IPG of Banten Province reached 91.74. This figure shows that the

achievement of women’s development in Banten Province is almost equal to that of men, approaching the perfect value of 100. This achievement is slightly higher than Indonesia’s national GPA, which stood at 91.06 in the same year. According to the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA) (Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak, 2020), IPG can be classified into two categories: IPG is low if the IPG value is less than 90.00, and IPG is high if the IPG value is greater than or equal to 90.00. Thus, Banten Province is included in the high HDI category, which means that the gender gap in development achievement is relatively small. In contrast, in 2020 there were 18 provinces in Indonesia with HDI values below the national average, indicating that there are still major challenges in achieving gender equality in various regions. The trend of Banten Province’s IDG achievement compared to the target in the RAD TPB, is presented in the following graph:



Figure 1. Achievement of the Banten Province Gender Empowerment Index (IDG) in 2017 and 2018

Source: RAD TPB, BPS, processed

Based on the graph presented, the achievement of the Banten Province Gender Empowerment Index (IDG) in 2017 and 2018 showed very satisfactory results, even exceeding the predetermined target. This positive trend experienced a significant decline in the following years. In 2019, Banten Province's IDG experienced a sharp decline to 68.83, and this figure declined further to 68.76 in 2020. This decline reflects the significant challenges in maintaining and increasing women's participation in various important sectors. The factors contributing to this decline need to be further analyzed to understand the main causes and find effective solutions.

The IDG is used to measure women's active participation in economic, political, and managerial fields. The three main indicators used are the percentage of women's contribution to labor income, women's involvement in parliament, and women's involvement in decision-making, as measured by the number of women in managerial, professional, administrative, and technical roles. The IDG provides a more in-depth picture of the extent to which women participate and contribute in various sectors of life that affect sustainable development.

The trend of IDG achievements in Banten Province shows an increase in women's participation in various strategic fields. Based on data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA), Banten Province has shown significant progress in increasing the role of women in the economic, political and managerial fields. This is in line with the targets set in the Regional Action Plan

for Sustainable Development Goals (RAD TPB). In the economic field, the increase in women's contribution to labor income shows that women are increasingly involved in productive economic activities, which not only improves family welfare but also contributes to regional economic growth.

In politics, women's involvement in parliament is an important indicator that reflects women's participation in the political decision-making process. This involvement is crucial to ensure that women's perspectives and needs are accommodated in public policy. In Banten Province, the increasing number of women sitting in parliament shows progress in gender representation in the political sphere.

In addition, in the managerial field, the increasing number of women in managerial, professional, administrative and technician positions shows that women are increasingly recognized and given the opportunity to contribute to the planning and implementation of various development programs. This is not only important for gender equality but also for the quality and sustainability of these programs, as various studies show that gender diversity in leadership can bring richer perspectives and better decisions.

One of the main components influencing the decline in the IDG is the decline in the sub-objective of the proportion of women in managerial positions. Managerial positions play a key role in strategic and operational decision-making across organizations. The decline in the proportion of women in these positions indicates that there are barriers that prevent women from achieving and

maintaining leadership positions. These barriers can be structural constraints, an unsupportive organizational culture, or lack of access to the training and development required to advance to managerial positions.

In addition, the decline in IDG is also influenced by the sub-objective of increasing the percentage of women's contribution in the economic sector, which has not yet reached the expected performance target. Women's contribution to the economy is not only important for improving individual and family welfare but also for overall economic growth. Women's involvement in productive economic activities can be strengthened through policies and programs that support women's entrepreneurship, access to capital, skills training, and the creation of an inclusive and gender-friendly work environment.

This decline in the IDG underscores the importance of evaluating and adjusting existing policies and programs. A more comprehensive and holistic approach is needed to address the challenges women face in achieving true empowerment. This includes identifying and addressing systemic barriers, improving access to education and training opportunities, and promoting a culture that supports gender equality in the workplace and society.

Furthermore, collaborative efforts between the government, private sector and civil society are needed to create an environment that allows women to develop and contribute to their full potential. Policies that encourage women's involvement in managerial positions and economic activities must be accompanied by effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

to ensure consistent implementation and tangible results.

As a strategic step, the Banten Provincial government can strengthen partnerships with civil society organizations and international institutions that have experience and expertise in gender empowerment. Through this collaboration, innovative programs that have proven successful elsewhere can be adapted and applied according to the local context. In addition, capacity building for local stakeholders in designing, implementing and evaluating gender empowerment programs is also crucial to ensure long-term sustainability and effectiveness.

In conclusion, although Banten Province has achieved significant progress in women's empowerment in 2017 and 2018, the decline in IDG in 2019 and 2020 indicates the need for more serious attention and more strategic actions. Continued efforts to address structural barriers, improve access to economic opportunities, and promote gender equality in all areas of life should be a top priority in Banten Province's sustainable development agenda. With strong commitment and cooperation from all parties, the SDGs targets in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment can be achieved, providing extensive benefits to the community and regional economy.

Women Empowerment and Environmental Sustainability at LAZ Harfa: An ABCD Perspective

Lembaga Amil Zakat Harapan Dhuafa (LAZ Harfa) is a non-profit organization (NGO) based in Banten Province. The presence of LAZ Harfa reflects community support in helping the government solve various social

and environmental problems. In addition, LAZ Harfa is committed to supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through various structured and systematic programs. This commitment is evident from the institution's profile on its official website as well as from the various programs they run, the focus of the programs implemented includes the fields of education, health, social and da'wah, disaster management and humanitarian assistance, community empowerment, economy, and other special programs.

One significant form of community development is gender-based development, especially women's empowerment. LAZ Harfa not only demonstrates this commitment through its programs, but also through its organizational structure. According to LAZ Harfa's Program and Partnership Director, Mamak Jamaksari, employees at LAZ Harfa are divided into two main segments: administrative and operational personnel in the office (called Amil) and field facilitators. The proportion of women among Amil staff reaches 35%, while among field facilitators at least 30% are women. This indicates the existence of policies that favor women and the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the foundation's recruitment and operational processes.

LAZ Harfa's partiality towards women is also reflected in the various empowerment programs they run. One example is the Microfinance Group (MFC) program which is focused on women. In this program, female field assistants play a key role as they can be more easily accepted by the beneficiaries who are mostly women. This approach shows how

LAZ Harfa understands the gender dynamics in the community and seeks to address the barriers women face in accessing services and support.

From the perspective of ecofeminism, LAZ Harfa's approach to women's empowerment and environmental sustainability is highly relevant. Ecofeminism, which links ecological issues with feminism, emphasizes the importance of addressing the exploitation of nature and women that often occurs simultaneously in patriarchal societies. LAZ Harfa's programs that empower women in a social and economic context can be seen as an attempt to counter the double domination faced by women and the environment.

However, the implementation of policies that favor women is not without challenges. One of the obstacles faced is the high rate of resignation of prospective female field assistants before they are officially accepted. Most of the reasons for this resignation are related to parental permission. To address this issue, LAZ Harfa implemented a policy that requires female applicants to show parental consent before being accepted as field assistants. This demonstrates LAZ Harfa's efforts to continue supporting women's participation while addressing existing social constraints.

LAZ Harfa's organizational structure also reflects a commitment to gender mainstreaming. Led by a female director, this structure ensures that women are involved in strategic decision-making, not just as policy implementers. This shows that LAZ Harfa recognizes the importance of women's involvement at all levels of the organization to achieve sustainable change.

Analysis from an ecofeminism perspective highlights the importance of a holistic approach to women's empowerment and environmental sustainability. LAZ Harfa's pro-women policies and programs reflect efforts to address gender and ecological injustices simultaneously. Programs such as that target women not only improve individual economic well-being but also strengthen the community as a whole. By giving women access to economic resources and a role in decision-making, LAZ Harfa helps create a more just and sustainable society.

In conclusion, LAZ Harfa demonstrated that an integrated approach to women's empowerment and environmental sustainability can have a significant impact. Through policies that support women's participation and programs that focus on gender needs, LAZ Harfa contributes to the achievement of the SDGs and promotes sustainable social transformation. An ecofeminism perspective provides a powerful framework to understand and appreciate these efforts, as well as to identify areas where further improvements can be made.

Women's Empowerment and Environmental Sustainability in the Desa Harapan Program: an Ecofeminism Perspective

Desa Harapan is a village development and empowerment program implemented by LAZ Harfa through an intensive community assistance approach. This program aims to encourage changes that originate from community awareness, with the main focus on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The approach used by LAZ Harfa

is Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), which emphasizes the active participation of all levels of society and the utilization of abundant local resources in the village (Alisjahbana et al., 2018). Community participation in these empowerment activities changes the paradigm from being a mere beneficiary to an active subject in development, who will continue to be an agent of change even if the facilitator or institution is no longer present at the location.

In various empowerment programs implemented, socialization on gender and child protection is an integral part that is always delivered to the community. Every program initiated by LAZ Harfa actively involves women, aiming to provide understanding and assistance on the importance of women's role in the community empowerment process. In addition, this program provides space for women to take an active role in achieving gender equality, participate, and be directly involved in activities that support this goal (Priyatna et al., 2017). Socialization on child protection is also carried out to protect children from violence both inside and outside the household, making this program more comprehensive and sustainable in increasing community responsiveness to gender and child protection issues.

The *Desa Harapan* program includes various empowerment activities that involve the active role of the community as beneficiaries. One of the main programs is the Microfinance Group (MFC), which provides revolving funds to poor communities to develop their businesses and achieve self-reliance. The KKM program involves

mentoring and lending business capital to small groups of 10 people in each assisted village. The capital provided varies depending on the type of business run by the group members. Women make up the majority of participants in this program because many of them previously depended solely on their husband's income and did domestic activities at home. With this program, women are given the opportunity to contribute to the family economy through the business they are engaged in.

The ecofeminism approach emphasizes the importance of addressing the exploitation of nature and women that often occurs simultaneously in patriarchal societies. LAZ Harfa's programs, such as KKM (Kelompok Keuangan Mikro), demonstrate efforts to counter the double domination faced by women and the environment. The KKM program not only provides capital loans but also provides training and competency building for women to run businesses based on available natural resources. This creates a sense of responsibility in women to repay the loan through the proceeds of their business, while increasing their economic independence.

Other programs in *Desa Harapan* are Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) and Clean Water Facilities (SAB). This program aims to overcome the problem of open defecation, which is still prevalent in several areas in Banten Province. Through the arisan jamban approach, the community is invited to build latrines independently. Education on the importance of protecting the environment and managing natural resources wisely is also provided to the community. The principle of

ecological empowerment is in accordance with the goals of the SDGs, where wise use of natural resources can have a long-term positive impact on future generations.

The ecofeminism approach adopted by LAZ Harfa is also evident in the program of utilizing yard land and greening the surrounding environment. This program actively involves housewives in planting various types of fruit and vegetable plants in their yards. In addition to creating food security at the family level, this program also provides economic opportunities by selling the harvest. LAZ Harfa acts as a facilitator, providing assistance and socialization on the utilization of yard land owned by the community. The big hope of this program is the creation of food security and family economic independence.

In the implementation of these programs, LAZ Harfa faces several obstacles, especially related to the high resignation rate of prospective female field assistants. Most of the reasons for this resignation are related to parental consent. To address this issue, LAZ Harfa implemented a policy that requires female applicants to show parental consent before being accepted as field assistants. This demonstrates LAZ Harfa's efforts to support women's participation while addressing existing social constraints.

LAZ Harfa's organizational structure reflects a commitment to gender mainstreaming. Led by a female director, this structure ensures that women are involved in strategic decision-making, not just as policy implementers. This shows that LAZ Harfa recognizes the importance of women's involvement at all levels of the organization

to achieve sustainable change. Other empowerment programs implemented by LAZ Harfa are organic and inorganic waste management training, healthy and nutritionally balanced local food ingredients management training, local product management and innovation training, the formation of child protection groups in the community, and greening the yard. In the organic waste management training, for example, LAZ Harfa involves a lot of active participation of women. This program can be categorized as an ecofeminist movement, as it involves women in environmental management through waste management. Women are educated about the negative impact of waste that is not managed properly, so that they better understand the importance of protecting the home and surrounding environment.

Novita Melani is a senior facilitator who has long been involved in community empowerment assistance activities in remote areas of Banten Province. Being a female social worker at LAZ Harfa is not an easy task. The programs implemented by LAZ Harfa are not just about providing physical building grants or basic community needs, but are more focused on achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Being a social worker is a personal choice for Novita Melani. She revealed that her job as a social worker is something she wants because she wants to help and benefit others. "Being a social worker is something that I want. I want myself to be able to help and benefit others," she said.

As a woman, Novita feels a responsibility to help other women in remote areas

of Banten. She channeled this sense of responsibility through her involvement in social activities at LAZ Harfa, where she felt her hopes and dreams were more quickly achieved than if she moved individually. Through this organization, Novita gained a lot of new knowledge and insights related to community empowerment, which involves a lot of women and also about environmental and natural resource management. Based on the results of interviews, in various villages where the empowerment program runs, more women are involved than men. This is because men work more outside the area where they live, so women are closer to the environment and natural resources in the area.

The role of women in environmental empowerment and management is very significant. Women's knowledge and experience can inspire and provide positive feedback for other women. Novita Melani revealed,

"It feels like learning for yourself when doing women's empowerment. When we educate the community and they want to change, it's very exciting. It's a sign that we succeeded in educating the community and they eventually changed."

This quote shows that empowerment activities carried out towards women not only have a positive impact on the beneficiaries, but also on the facilitators themselves. When women are empowered, they are able to provide significant changes to the community, especially other women. From the perspective of ecofeminism, the empowerment movement carried out by

Novita Melani can be considered as part of the ecofeminist movement. Ecofeminism connects the exploitation of women and nature that often occurs together in a patriarchal society (Shiva & Mies, 2014). The changes that occur in the community become a trigger for the facilitator's enthusiasm to continue doing social work that makes a positive contribution to other communities. Women's knowledge and experience in the field provide important insights for facilitators and institutions to be able to improve and modify programs in other areas to achieve satisfactory results. The success of this empowerment program is measured based on changes in the mindset, attitude, and behavior of the community regarding the environment and its natural resources.

Novita Melani also shared the story of her first assignment as a social worker, when she was sent to the tsunami disaster site in Sunda Strait. As a female facilitator, she faced her own challenges, especially in preparing for her biological needs and meeting new people in an unstable psychological state due to the disaster.

"To be able to stay for days was a challenge for me. However, the spirit of carrying out social missions is the factor that gives me enthusiasm for what I will and am doing."

Seeing women and children affected by the disaster is one of the factors that keeps her in the field. Novita Melani's approach to women, the elderly, and children is easier because of their shared knowledge and experience. Female facilitators are an important part of the success of the empowerment process, as they can

understand the needs and challenges faced by fellow women. "Seeing women who do not have healthy latrines and have to defecate in the forest, as well as waste that is not managed properly, makes me concerned. But, slowly the community, especially the women, are realizing the importance of protecting the environment," Novita explained.

The empowerment process carried out by LAZ Harfa in the *Desa Harapan* program also includes the Microfinance Group (MFC) program. This program provides revolving funds to poor communities to develop businesses and achieve self-reliance. In this program, women play a key role as they do more activities in the home environment than men who work outside. With this program, women are given the opportunity to contribute to the family economy through their businesses.

Other programs within *Desa Harapan* are Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) and Clean Water Facilities (WASH). These programs aim to address the problem of open defecation and improve community access to proper sanitation facilities. Through the arisan jamban approach, the community is invited to build toilets independently and education about the importance of protecting the environment is given to the community. This ecological principle of empowerment is in line with the goals of the SDGs, where the wise use of natural resources can have a long-term positive impact on future generations.

CONCLUSION

The *Desa Harapan* program run by LAZ Harfa demonstrates a strong commitment to women's empowerment and environmental

sustainability through an ecofeminism approach. The program not only involves women as beneficiaries but also as facilitators who play a key role in implementing various empowerment activities. Through the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, LAZ Harfa encourages the active participation of the community, especially women, in managing natural resources and the environment wisely.

The ecofeminism approach applied in LAZ Harfa's programs shows that women have an important role in preserving the environment and achieving sustainable development. Activities such as the Microfinance Group (MFC), Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), and Clean Water Facility (SAB) show how women's knowledge and experience can be integrated in sustainable environmental management efforts. These programs also prove that women's empowerment can improve the economic welfare of families and communities, while supporting the achievement of sustainable development goals. Challenges faced, such as the high turnover rate of female fieldworkers, point to the need for approaches that are more sensitive to the needs and constraints faced by women. Policies that support women's participation, such as parental consent for female applicants, as well as female leadership in organizational structures, demonstrate LAZ Harfa's efforts to overcome these barriers.

Analysis from an ecofeminism perspective highlights the importance of strengthening the role of women in environmental management and sustainable development. By actively engaging women

and recognizing their contributions, LAZ Harfa not only contributes to the achievement of SDGs but also encourages broader social transformation. This integrated approach demonstrates that women's empowerment and environmental conservation can go hand in hand to create a more just and sustainable society.

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