

**ACCESS**

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**COMMUNITY BASED IMPACT EVALUATION REPORT**

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# COMMUNITY BASED IMPACT EVALUATION REPORT

## 1 Impact evaluation methodology

### 1.1 Approach, design and methodology, evaluation tools and media

The impact evaluation study measures ‘the long-term change in attitudes, behavior, skills and capabilities of the targeted group achieved through a sequence of effects resulting from different activities initiated by the project’ (refer to ACCESS Milestones 3 and 5).

The methodological approach is a participatory community-based study. The study aims to enable the stakeholders to learn about the impact of ACCESS’s program on the community’s life and conditions. Therefore, the study encourages direct and active participation of the community and partners in collecting data, analyzing, reporting, and sharing the results.

The method used the study focus group discussions (FGD), with separate female and male discussion groups. Sharing between the two groups and further elaboration of the findings was conducted in general/plenary sessions. A village FGD was facilitated by a team of facilitators supported by village facilitators. Each team usually consisted of six people including a facilitator, co facilitator, and note taker for each female/male group discussion.

The evaluation tool consists of ten aspects, elaborating changes in the individual, household and community level, and ability to network and maintain program sustainability. Assessment of the relationship between the communities and the CSO partners and the beneficiaries’ perception of the program benefits is extra information to indicate the level of support provided.

To ensure a high level of participation and trigger discussions among the villagers, open ended questions together with visual aids were used, including drawings and various ways of scoring. The study took two days in each village. Overall, the time frame of the study in the field was three months for all districts (conducted at the end of January until early April 2007), with an exception of a few pilot studies that were conducted prior to this period. Impact evaluation training first started in Lombok in January and other districts then followed suit. The whole process was implemented for about four months (for training-implementation-workshops in eight districts, and ACCESS internal meeting).

### 1.2 Study questions and assumptions

The study consists of 10 questions, i.e. eight questions to elaborate on changes that occurred on:

- Skills and knowledge,
- Quality of life/family welfare,
- Relations between men and women at the household level,
- Self confidence to get involved in village development,
- Women
- The poor’s involvement in village activities,
- Ability to gain support from other parties,
- Ability to maintain the program.

The other two questions sought information on:

- The level of support provided by CSOs
- Perceptions of benefits from the program compared to the contributions provided by the participants.

### **1.2.1 Assumptions:**

At the beginning of each discussion, a facilitator must facilitate a discussion on the meaning of the key questions. It is assumed that the process is conducted in a way that ensures participants have a similar understanding of the topics being discussed. Secondly, it is assumed that the facilitators have common skills and knowledge to be able to conduct good group discussions, as they have already attended impact evaluation training and gone through a selection process, based on facilitation skills. Thirdly, participants of the discussion are expected to have sufficient information regarding the program, to ensure that they are familiar with the topics and can provide accurate information.

### **1.3 Data recording, review and analysis process**

Data was recorded using minutes. The facilitator team then compiled and analyzed the data. The data was then put into an impact evaluation report for each village. Data entries in the ACCESS Management Information System (Ersula) were based on each village's impact evaluation report. The Ersula data then was used for higher levels of analysis and gender analysis on the ACCESS program.

Data analysis was carried out using several steps. The initial data analysis was conducted by respective village study team's who were supported by ACCESS staff (Program Officer (PO) and Senior Program Officers (SPO) CD) to ensure a good quality report. The SPO CD summarized the report for each district to then be used for the second level of analysis. This level was conducted at a workshop at the district level, where multi-stakeholder participants (local government agencies, villagers, NGO/CSO, and other donors/projects) analyzed the data and provided feedback on lessons learnt. The findings were compiled to be used for the next level of analysis, i.e. during the two day ACCESS staff meeting, involving POs, SPOs CD, SPO ME/CL, and advisors. The final step of the analysis was completed by SPO ME/CL with the assistance of the gender and CD/CL advisor, by extracting the key findings from all of the steps throughout the analysis.

### **1.4 Quality assurance**

The main actors of the study were ACCESS partners, namely the CSOs and the communities. ACCESS provided support and assistance in the field, particularly during the group discussions, in terms of finance, methodology, quality control, and moral support. This field support was mainly provided by Assistant PO, (APOs) and POs, with assistance from SPO CD, in particular. Facilitators also shared responsibility by providing methodological support in the field.

Data in the data analysis was validated at every step, whenever a discrepancy or clarification was needed. The most critical stage of validation was during the reporting stage, which was carried out by the facilitation team and the PO/SPO. The next critical and important data validation was conducted at the ACCESS staff meeting, where all of the staff were directly engaged in the program implementation, studied the data from all of the districts and further elaborated on the data, particularly on phenomenal/unusual/specific trends. Possible causes

for the particular trends were discussed and the possibility of incorrect or missing data was also verified.

## **2 Implementation of Impact Evaluation**

### **2.1 Target and study teams**

There were 63 CLAPP programs in 63 villages involved in the study, across 8 districts. There were 1747 respondents, 904 women and 843 men.

The study team consisted of 38 core facilitators from NGOs/CSOs (17 female; 21 male) and 71 village facilitators (41 female; 30 male), who supported the core teams.

The study teams and the village facilitators participated in four days of class training on participative monitoring and evaluation. There was a “trial” session carried out in two villages in West Lombok, where the participants had the opportunity to put the knowledge into practice, while the other participants had an opportunity to observe the process and learn from it.

The training team was a collaboration between ACCESS and Mitra Samya (Service Provider of CLAPP). The training design, session and material were developed together. ACCESS focused on the area of monitoring and evaluation, while Mitra Samya was responsible for participative approaches and facilitation skills. The topics covered participatory monitoring and evaluation, impact evaluation framework, sustainability framework, impact evaluation instruments, analysis and reporting, and facilitation techniques. Various methods were used in the training, namely presentation of theory, group or plenary discussions, role plays, games and reflection.

Training participants were selected by ACCESS using two sets of criteria. The criteria for CSO facilitators were:

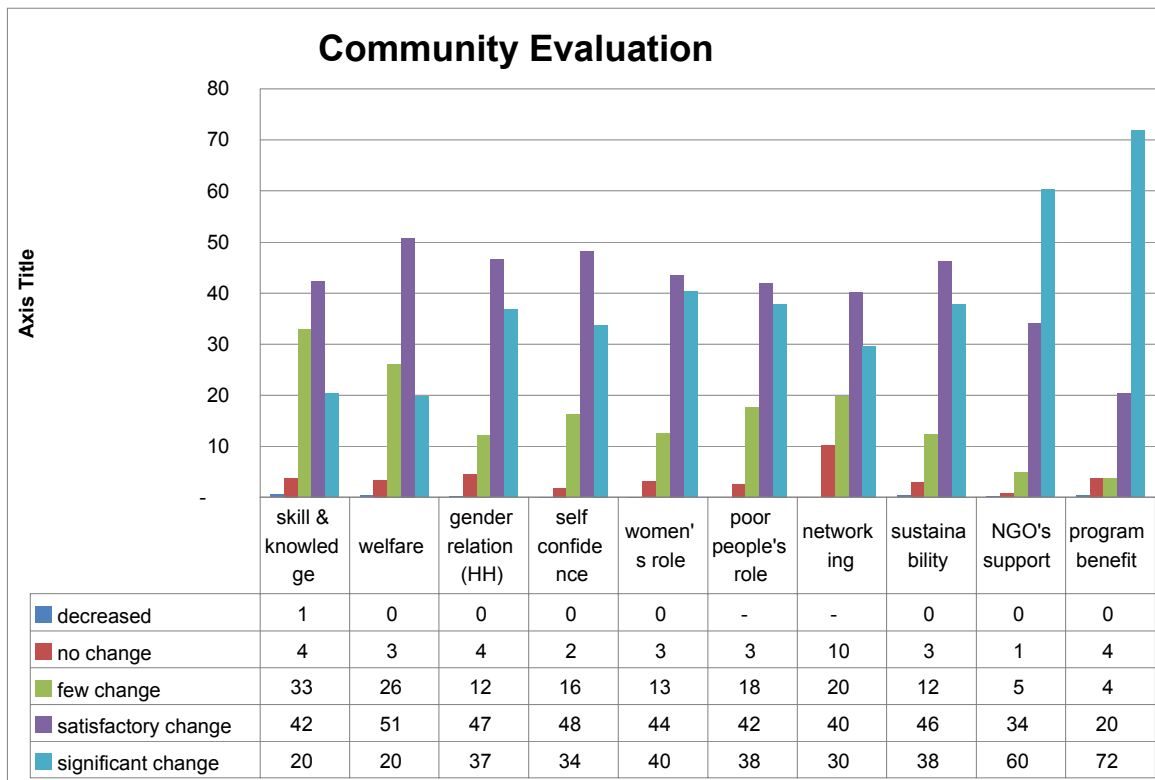
- Basic skills and knowledge of facilitation,
- Facilitation experience,
- Willing to attend the whole process (training, implementation, reporting, and reflection),
- Fluent in the local language.

Criteria for village facilitators were:

- Active in village activities (particularly in ACCESS programs),
- Willing to attend the whole process,
- Commitment to his/her group was an advantage.

One female and one male participant from each village facilitated. However, in the implementation, there were actually more female facilitators than male.

### 3 Findings

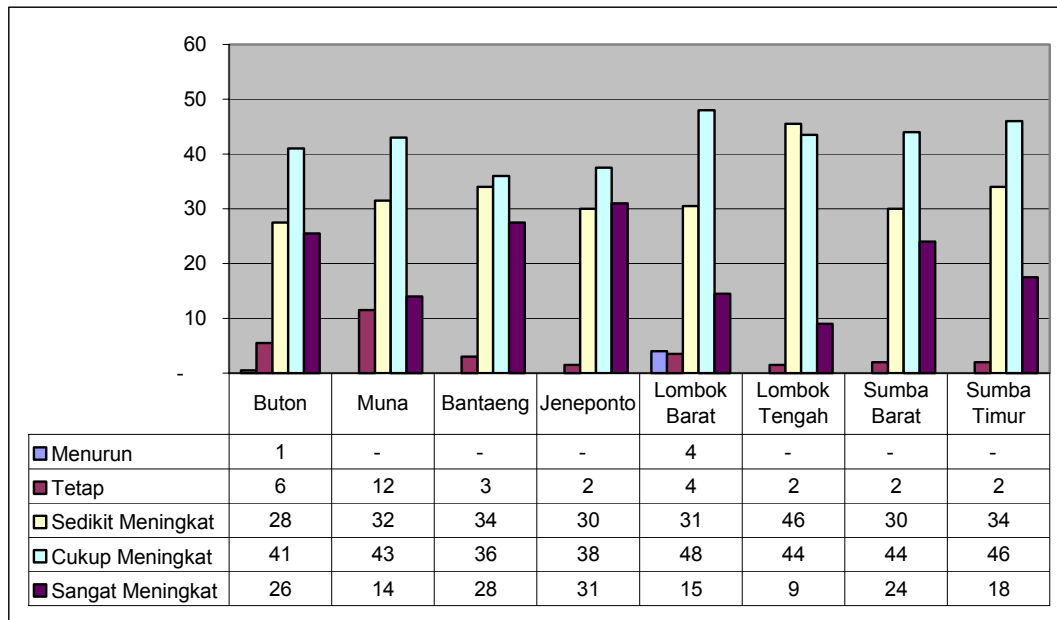


Overall, significant positive changes for men and women occurred in all aspects of the program. Among the 10 aspects evaluated, the highest result levels were in the area of empowerment and gender relations. In the area of empowerment, significant changes were self confidence to participate (82%) and the involvement of the poor (80%) in village activities, and the ability to sustain the program (84%), while the area of gender relations had considerably high scores for changes in men and women’s relations within the household (84%) and women’s role in village development (84%)<sup>1</sup>.

The two other aspects showed that the participants, both men and women, voted for ‘highly satisfied’ for both NGO/CSO’s support and program benefits. Almost all of the respondents (94%) reported significant and excellent NGO/CSO support. Similarly, participants of the study said that the program benefits were far greater than the costs (92%) said the benefits were both satisfactory and significantly greater than their contribution.

<sup>1</sup> The percentages are percentages of the highest and the second highest scores.

### 3.1 Changes in skills and knowledge

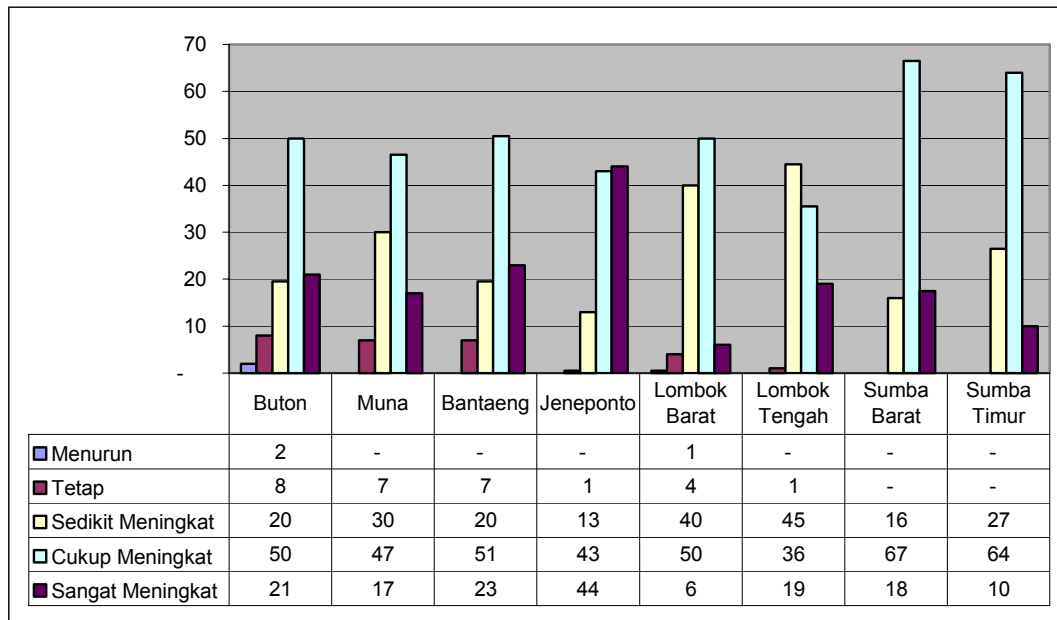


Overall, respondent rated the changes in the area of increased skills and capacities as significant (65%). Generally, men seemed to benefit more from capacity building with a higher proportion of men reporting moderate or significant increase in skills development in all of the districts (except for Jeneponto, Buton and West Sumba). This was the only indicator where males overall gave higher ratings than females. It is interesting to note that while this indicator was not rated as highly as many of the others, in most other areas capacity building, new skills and attitudes and training were cited as the most important reasons for improvement. It should be noted, however, that while this area was scored among the lowest in the study, capacity building and training were consistently mentioned as a major, if not the major, enabling factor in almost all other areas. It may be that “changes in skills and knowledge” were only recognized as part of a process that brought results, not as something significant in itself.

There are three main enabling factors. First is effective training, that characterized by, among others, that the training was in accordance with the community needs, availability of local resources to implement the knowledge and skill gained from the training, availability of facilities and inputs to follow up training, and the training were delivered by the experts. The second component is training follow up- to allow the participants get maximum benefit of the training by practicing the new skills. The role of the facilitator is considered as an important factor for the training participants to master the new skills / knowledge. Third, is the existence of community groups that were functioning as a learning centre for the community, where the members could share ideas, raise issues/problems, and practice the new skills/knowledge.

A specific enabling factor for women was the support and permission of the husband to allow women to perform activities outside the house. A major impediment for women was the limited time available to participate in activities as they had to devote their time and energy to household chores. Some women mentioned that health problems were also an impediment. For those who were poor, time and distance from the activity were major impediments.

### 3.2 Changes in economic welfare

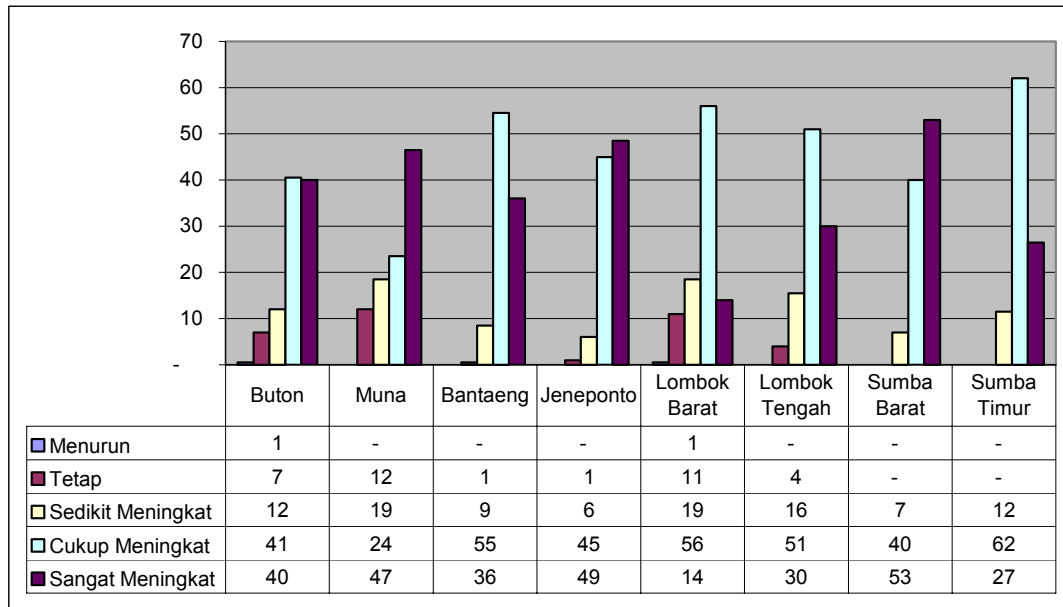


More than 70% of participants reported good and significant improvement in the area of economic welfare. Overall, women reported higher levels of improved welfare, particularly in Muna, Jeneponto, Central Lombok, and West Sumba. The highest proportion of improved welfare was reported in Jeneponto by 99% of women and 74% of men.

However, in West and Central Lombok, between 33-57% males and females reported little change, and in Muna, Jeneponto and Central Lombok significantly higher proportions of males reported little change in welfare (differences between 20 - 25 %).

The major enabling factors were new skills and knowledge gained from various capacity building activities that allowed the community to set up new productive activities, increase productivity of the existing business, improve business and financial management (although within small scope), and reduce the production cost (for instance, being able to develop their own seed). Secondly was the ability to expand networks and markets for their production that contributed to increase the income. The third factor was the program support that made their life easier, for example: water supply, access to credit and facilities for farming. Water supply was frequently mentioned by the participants as an important improvement. Both men and women recognized that water supplies provided by the program had substantially increased their welfare. For women, they said that the easy access to water had given them opportunity to do new activities as they had more spare time than before. While women valued water supply in relation to their duty to manage household tasks, men appreciated water supply to make planting and irrigation easier.

### 3.3 Changes in gender relations



Improvement in gender relations rated very highly across all the districts (84%). Women's scores were slightly higher than men. Proportionally, more women voted for the highest level of change in gender relations throughout all districts, except in West Lombok. In Muna, 37% of males compared to 24% of women reported little or no change.

This analysis applies to aspects of women's involvement in the community, as it is not possible to draw a separate line between what influences gender relations and role in public and domestic spheres.

Generally, it is considered that women were at a lower starting point than men, therefore they felt changes more readily and more easily. In addition, as women carry the responsibility to perform household duties, they generally reported both economic and non-economic benefits from the program, while men tended to perceive only the economic benefits. The programs initiated at the village level aimed to address basic or practical needs, which also had an additional impact on gender relations. For example, water supply, in particular has a significant impact on women's perceptions of change. Availability of water has definitely reduced women's burden and time consumed in performing household chores. It has allowed them to have more time to spend in other roles, such as economic or social activities. The latter contributes to women's improved status and position within household and communities.

When women have more money they have more control to attend social economic activities such as *arisan* groups, they can pay for their children's education, they are released from debt payments and are able to contribute more (funds and time) to public activities. Men also benefit from reduced stress when their wives earn income, particularly when they feel their position as head of the household is maintained (for instance, their permission is still sought from their wives to attend meetings.) In some cases, there were direct changes in gender roles, for example, men's increased awareness of women's workload during the assessment

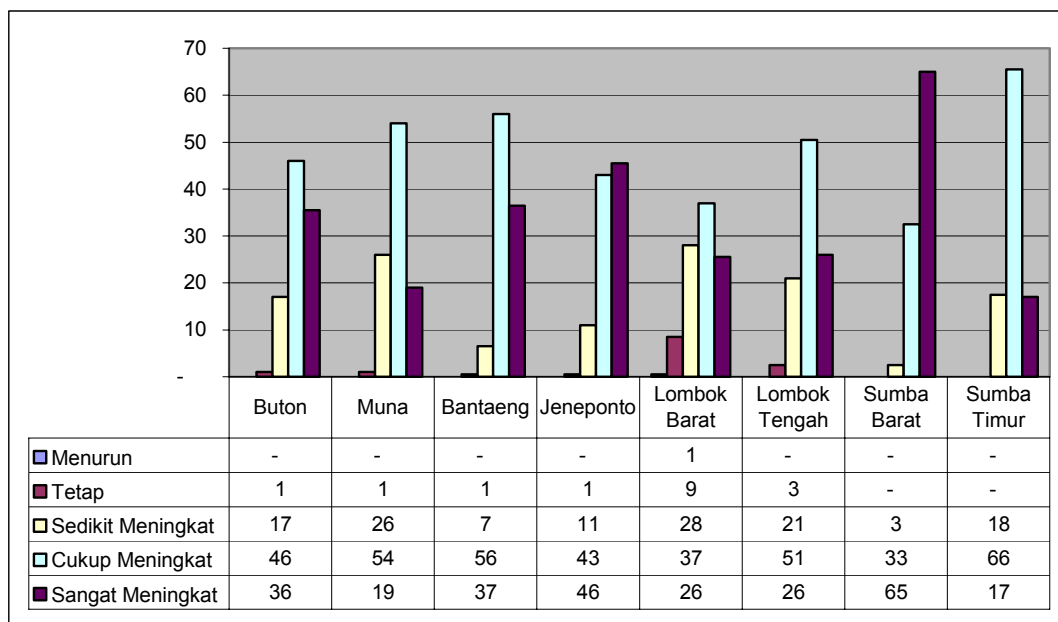
stage using the calendar tool resulted in some men deciding to contribute more to domestic duties.

There were some remarkable examples of change including a reduction in domestic violence, where villages developed *Perdes* (village regulations) with provided sanctions for perpetrators of domestic violence. On the other hand, there was a strong patriarchy, *adat* (traditional customs) systems and superiority among the elite in some areas, particularly in Lombok and Sumba, which were resistant to change.

There were three key enabling factors. First, the existence of policies that promoted gender equality using inclusive approaches within the ACCESS program itself. Inclusive approaches imply that men were also participants and “target” of the program. The result was that changes happened to men and women regarding gender relations and gender roles. Changes in men’s perception of gender relations and gender roles were a crucial factor for the changes experienced by women. Women frequently made statements that support this and permission from their husbands was an important factor to allowed them to become involved in community activities. Secondly, various and continuous efforts to promote understanding on gender equality, followed by encouraging the community to practice it in the daily life. Thirdly, direct benefit of program assistance to release the burden of poor families that were carried out by empowering the communities had motivated the families and men to support women’s involvement in program activities.

The examples of how the gender policy is implemented in the field include: women were involved and encouraged to express opinions in meetings; training on gender issues and continuous and informal discussion on gender and women’s leadership training were core activities mentioned by the groups.

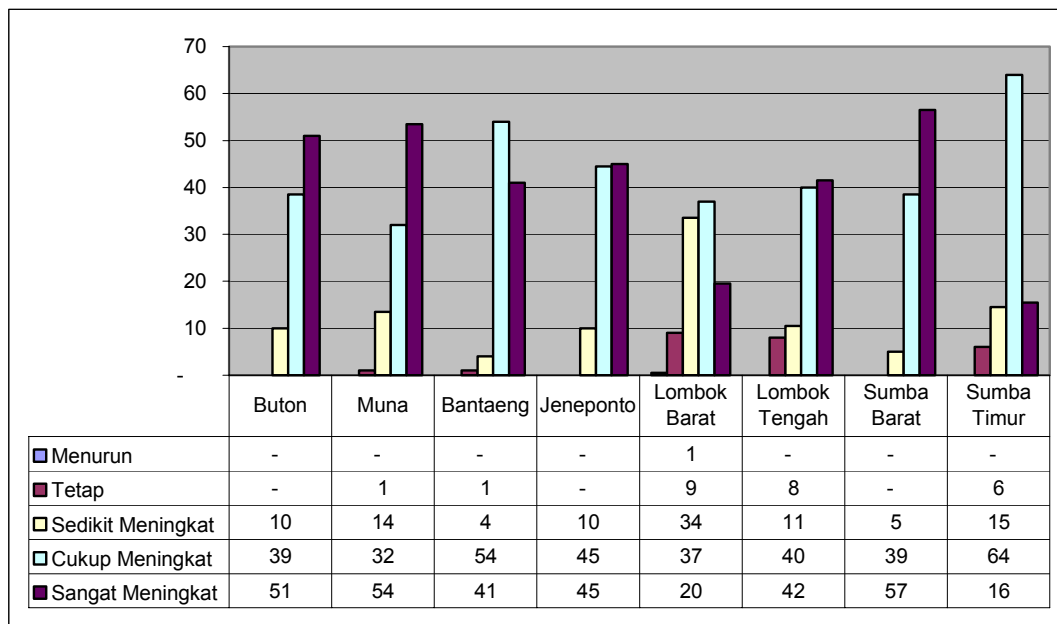
### 3.4 Changes in self confidence to be involved in community activities.



Self-confidence to participate in community activities was increased considerably, with 82% of votes for significant or very significant change. Overall, women reported higher changes than men, with a 7 % difference in scores. This included 50% or more women voting at the top level throughout all districts, except in West Lombok and East Sumba. In West Lombok, a third of men reported little or no change, which was similar for women in West Lombok and East Sumba. In Bantaeng and Central Lombok there was a clear gender differentiation at this level.

The main enabling factor for significant improvement in self confidence to participate in public activities was the capacity building activities. The capacity building activities had helped the participants to broaden their perspective, knowledge and improve skills, and improvement in these areas had increased their self confidence. Besides improvement in knowledge and skills, the opportunity to get to know “other world other than their own village”, such as meeting other communities, visiting other places, meet “important” people (such as high ranking government officers) were all significant factors. Besides the broad range of training, the intensity and frequency of the capacity building effort was also mentioned as one of the enabling factors. One-off training with no follow-up was perceived as insufficient and not effective.

### 3.5 Changes in women’s involvement in community activities



This area was one of the three highest percentages for satisfactory and significant changes, noted by 84% of respondents. The gender difference was not significant (83% and 82% in favor of men) across all districts. Overall, around 80% of men and women (except for West Lombok and women in East Sumba) felt there had been satisfactory or significant change (ranging from 79-100%).

The biggest gender differences at the top level were in Bantaeng with 72% of women reporting significant change compared to 10% of men and in Central Lombok there were 52% of women compared to 31% of men. Interestingly in East Sumba 92% of men reported satisfactory and significant changes compared to only 67% of women.

Positive changes of women's role in village development were influenced by various interventions, and a key factor was ACCESS's policy to strengthen gender equality by ensuring a gender balance in all program cycles and all activities.

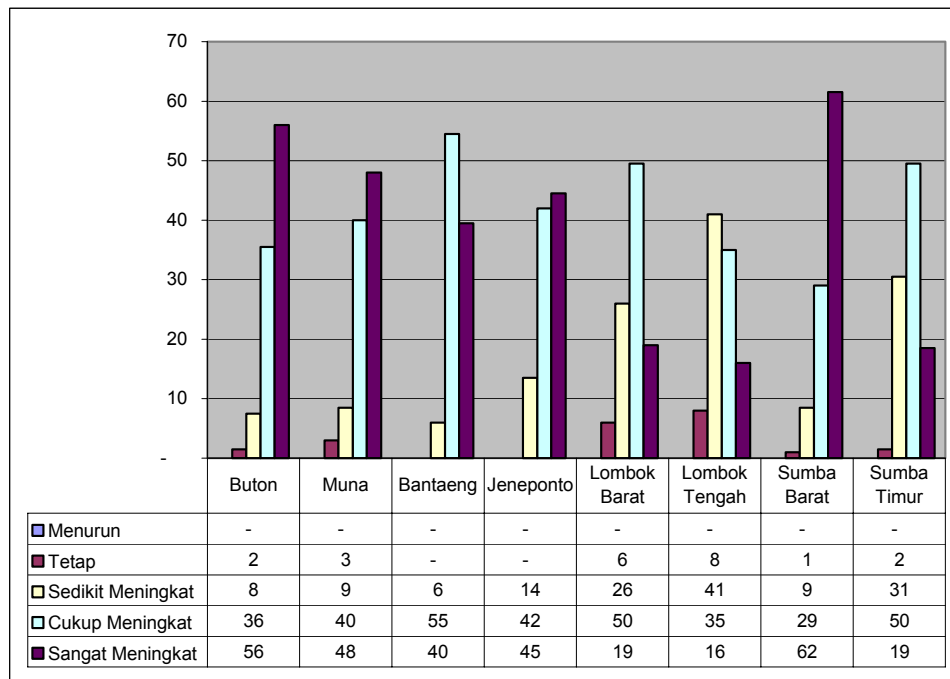
On the other hand, external factors that had a strong influence in shaping unequal gender relations leading to poor improvements. Patriarchy and domination of the elite were some of the external factors.

The main factor underlying gender differences as found in Bantaeng was different levels of appreciation. As women previously experienced very little involvement in public activities at the village level, they are very appreciative that they now have an active role. To support this argument, there were male group discussions that scored the change of women's role as satisfactory, while women scored the changes as significant, even though the facts and evidence of change mentioned by both groups were the same.

On the other hand, in East Sumba men gave higher scores than women. In this district, both men and women acknowledged changes, with gender differences in favor of men. This was caused by the different levels of the focus discussions. Women reported low scores, although they appreciated the changes in the role of women in group activities, they felt that women's involvement at higher levels was still minimal. For men, although women's role at the village level was minimal, they still gave a higher score than women because women began to be more involved and at the group level, women actually had strong and strategic roles.

The above phenomena also exists in West Lombok, where in some villages men scored higher and in other villages, it was the women who voted higher, even though the evidence of change was the same for both. Another reason that was raised by the groups is that women in West Lombok were already involved in public activities, therefore the changes were not considered to be as significant.

### 3.6 Changes in the poor's involvement in community activities



Improvement in the involvement of the poor in community activities was very high. Overall, 80% of respondents reported satisfactory and significant changes. Women voted slightly higher than men. Women voted for the highest level more frequently in all district (except for West Lombok), with a range of 14 to 45 % difference in points. The most frequent high scores were from women in Jenepono (100%) and Buton (99%) while the lowest level of change was reported by 43% of men in Central Lombok.

However, three districts also scored quite highly for little or no change. In West Lombok, 36% of men and 28% of women respondents voted for little or no change, in Central Lombok there were 57% of men and 41% of women and in East Sumba there were 30% of men and 34% of women. In Jenepono, while 27% of men reported little change, 100% of women reported satisfactory or significant change.

The ACCESS program focused on women and the poor, therefore the majority of participants involved were women and the poor. Women and the poor were seldom engaged in public activities previously, so the process to get them involved resulted in obvious changes and was greatly appreciated.

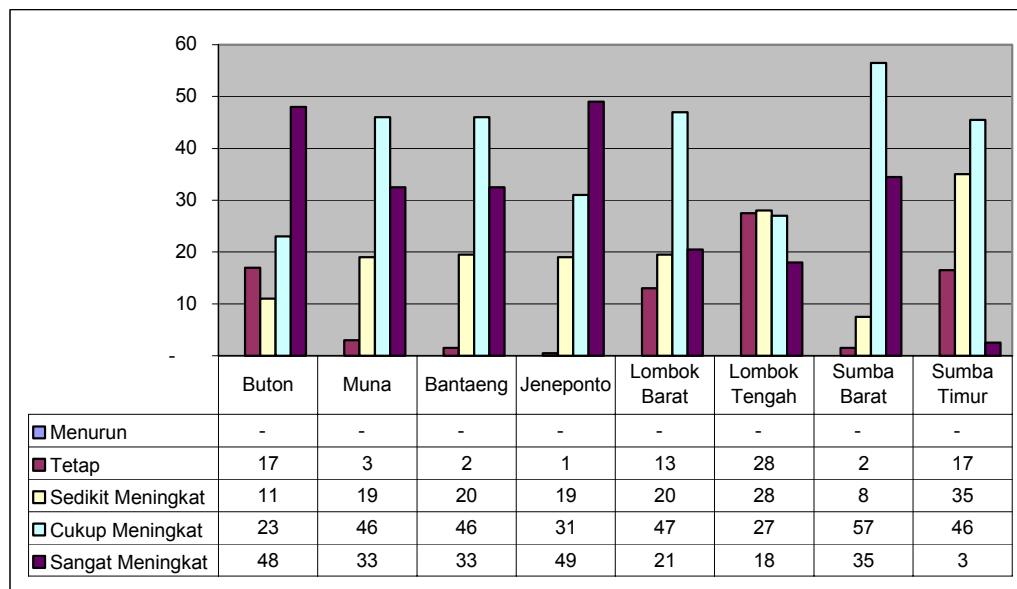
In East Sumba, there were villages that had few village activities so there were few opportunities for people to take a role outside of the group. Those who had special assignments such as the RT, RW, and the head of sub-villages were the representatives at the village level. This meant that the poor, who usually do not hold such positions, could not be involved. Another reason was that the involvement of the poor was only in certain stages of activities (usually at the beginning), and then their involvement would decrease as the project progressed. People in Kaheri village said that they were only fully involved in ACCESS programs.

People in Lombok and East Sumba said that characteristics of the poor, such as low confidence, lack of trust from the community due to their financial constraints and limited opportunities for the poor to be active as their time and energy was devoted to earning money were causes for lack of involvement.

There were two main enabling factors. First is the pro-poor program policy that was consistently implemented. The involvement of the poor in program implementation was a “must” in all program cycles. Secondly, was the empowerment approach that encouraged and promoted the poor to participate in their communities and which built other people’s trust and appreciation toward the poor. Methodology and approaches such as CLAPP were used to make it easier for the poor to be involved. In addition, the empowering approach also raised awareness about equal rights and equal positions of the poor. Empowerment was encouraged through various trainings, meetings, intensive facilitation and opportunities for the poor to manage program activities.

The key impeding factors included: time constraint as the poor had to devote their time and energy to earn a living, dependency on the “elites”, low level of Indonesian language proficiency, determination of “who are the poor” by external parties (such as village government) and low support and commitment from the village government to support the poor. The external determination of poor people (which is case specific) resulted in “mis-targeted” program beneficiaries.

### 3.7 Changes in capability to lobby and gain support

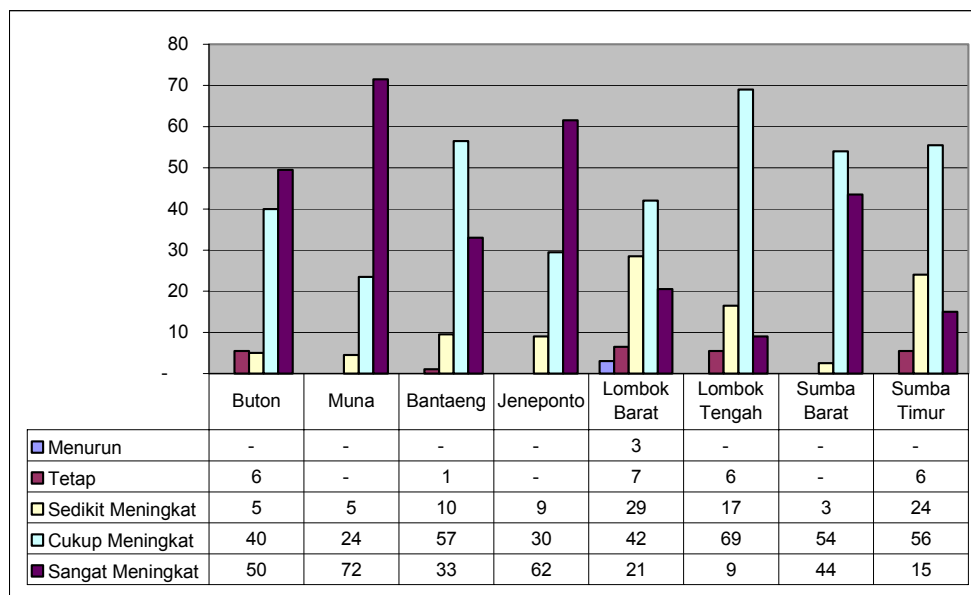


Overall, the ability to lobby and gain support was rated at 70%. This score, together with capacity building and welfare, were among the three lowest scores in the evaluation. In Bantaeng and Jeneponto women scored 100% and 92% respectively for satisfactory and significant change. Scores of more than 45% for little or no change were reported in Central Lombok and East Sumba for both men and women. One possible reason for the low score in gaining support was in part due to the lack of effort and attention from CSOs and ACCESS compared to what they invested in other areas of the program to capacitate communities to be able to gain support from other parties independently. Other reasons were a dependency on

CSOs and formal/informal leaders for networking, insufficient information on mechanisms, bureaucracy, available resources, and a lack of advocacy skills.

There were three core enabling factors. First were specific trainings mentioned by the groups, i.e. training on how to develop proposals, community organizing and social marketing trainings. Second, the effort to connect the community members to those in authority or with special expertise (mostly done during trainings and meetings where CSO partners introduced and connected them to prospective resources). Third was the existence of community groups that were perceived as a place where individuals could share and discuss issues before lobbying or beginning advocacy. On the other hand, for the external parties, the existence of community groups encouraged them to give support and attention (rather than working with individuals).

### 3.8 Changes in capability to support sustainability of program activities

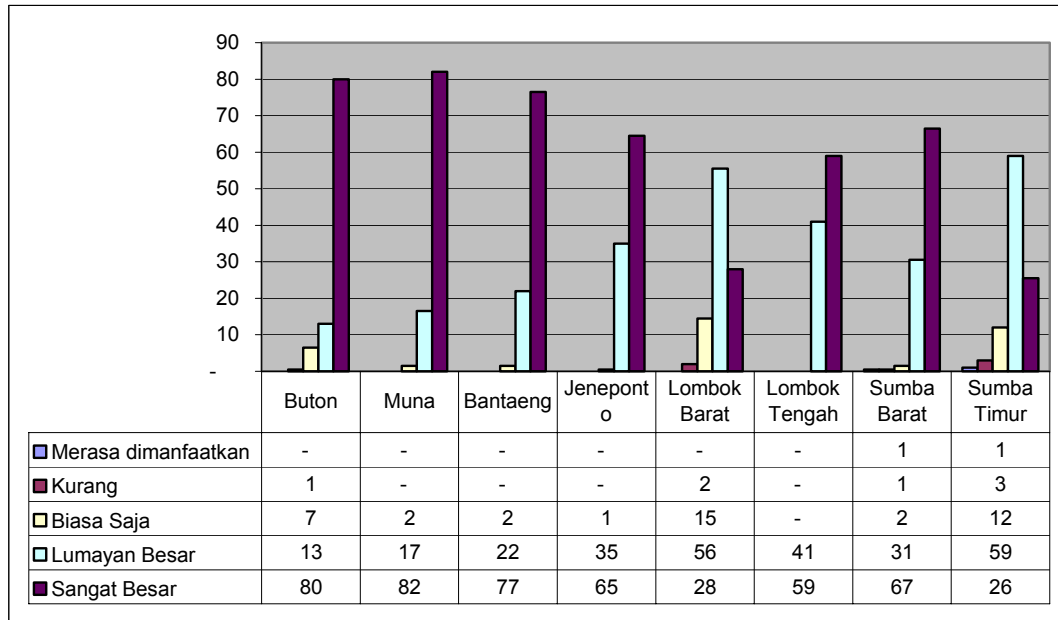


Overall, more than 80% of women and men reported satisfactory or significant change, with scoring in Sulawesi generally higher than in NTB and NTT (except for in West Sumba, whose score was the highest). However, around 30% of women in East Sumba and Central Lombok and around 30% of men and women in West Lombok reported little and no change.

There are several enabling factors for sustainability. First was project committee capacity to promote and implement transparency. The improved capacity built the community's trust and gave access to community members to control program implementation and program assets. Second, skills and knowledge gained from capacity building activities. Third, self-confidence to manage programs and activities as they had experience and had been trained to do program management and make decisions. Next is the benefits provided by programs that motivated the community to ensure continuity of the services. The existence of local institutions to manage and develop program assets was the next enabler, accompanied by the group's regulations or rules established by the community themselves and the enforcement of these regulations.

The impeding factors included, for instance, external factors such as failed crops due to seasonal reasons, un-paid credit as the recipient of the credit considered the credit as a “grant” and did not necessarily pay the credit back. This perception was strongly influenced by previous practice where several schemes did not successfully implement the principles of saving and credit.

### 3.9 Level of support from CSOs



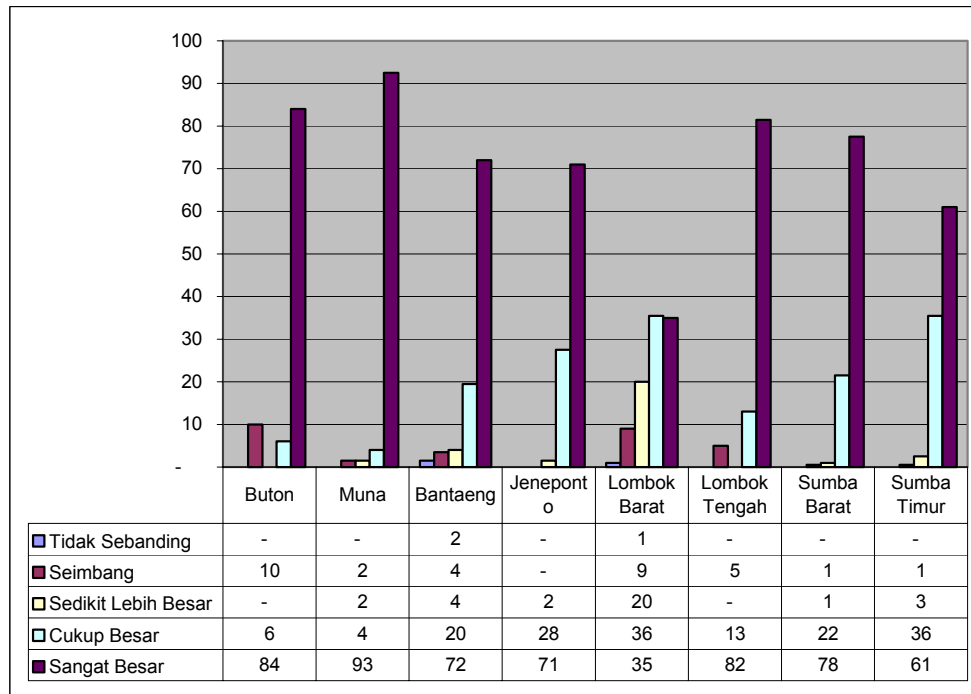
Overall, more than 90% of both men and women reported good or high satisfaction with the support from CSOs. Scoring was generally higher in Sulawesi than in NTB and NTT. Both men and women in West Lombok and East Sumba did not choose the highest level compared to other areas in the study. Indeed, in West Lombok, around a third of the men reported the highest level of “ordinary/not special” support.

Effective CSO support according to the groups was when:

- The CSO had a good immersion process,
- Implemented transparency,
- Empowered communities by giving chances to the communities to manage programs
- Always involved the community in all program areas,
- Created security and feelings of comfort to discuss issues and ask assistance,
- Intensive facilitation on the ground with clear outputs (some mentioned that living in the village was also crucial),
- Responsive,
- Provided assistance and facilitation that matched their needs and performed it professionally,
- Easy to be accessed,
- Treated community members equally
- Motivating in their style.

On the other hand, the groups described negative CSO support when the support provided only occurred within project timeframe and stopped when project finished, low mobility of the CSO staff in the village level and providing assistance they did not request, support did not reach sub-village level, lack of monitoring, contacting only certain people or used a top-down approach.

### 3.10 Cost-benefit assessment by the community



Overall, both men and women found the benefits adequately or far outweighed the costs (90%). All districts (except for West Lombok) the scores were hovering around 100% for moderate and significant benefits. West Sumba showed by highest percentage of 4 and 5 scores for the most satisfied for both men and women (100%).

The lowest assessment came from West Lombok where around one third of the respondents felt that benefits only slightly outweighed or were the same as the costs (although around 70% were satisfied). Women were more dissatisfied in this district - about 30% said that the benefits were only slightly higher than their contributions.

Programs were highly appreciated by the beneficiaries as the programs allowed them to learn and gain new knowledge and skills, broaden their perspective, expand their networks, raise awareness on their rights and equal position (specifically for women and those who are poor), and increased self confidence. The achievement contributed to the ability to improve their lives, motivated them to undertake changes (in particular to release them from poverty). The program benefit was valued substantially higher than their contribution as the program's outputs were in line with the community needs.

Villages where both men and women gave low scores in West Lombok were Mekarsari and Pemenang. Men scored less than women in these two villages, while the lowest score from women was in Sandik. One of possible reasons was weak CSO support, which affected

program quality and the benefits. This is in line with the fact that some men reported low satisfaction with the CSO's support (11% in Mekarsari said that the support was insufficient, and none voted for moderate or significant support in Pemenang). The other reasons expressed by the groups were: not everyone benefited, lack of program quality, household responsibilities restrained women from active involvement (Sandik – interestingly, in this village men expressed 100% of moderate satisfaction).

Women in Jeneponto and West Sumba felt they obtained great benefits from the water and sanitation facilities that reduced their burden of household chores in terms of time and energy. This meant that they now have the opportunity to be involved in other activities.

## **4 Analysis of Findings**

### **4.1 Quality of life impacts**

The quality of life of the community in the ACCESS working area has increased, although it is not as great compared to many other aspects of the program. There were two important components which were:

- 1) Increased income
- 2) Facilitating the community to obtain income.

This was assisted by the provision of facilities for basic needs (such as clean water and sanitation) and the facilities to work or expand enterprises (such as having access to capital and farming and harvesting equipment, which really eased the work load compared to when it was all done manually using a corn grinder, pitch forks and so on). This access and facilities also impacted on increased income although it was not significant enough to eliminate poverty. Families whose income increased stated that they are now able to cover their daily needs like food and school expenses. They are also free of debt to creditors and are able to start to save some money. Massive rises in costs related to fuel prices, transportation etc, during the project period may have contributed to the lower scores in this area.

### **4.2 Gender and poverty inclusion**

Improved gender relations and involvement of the poor was very significant compared to other aspects of the program. Changes in gender relations occurred at the household and community levels. On the domestic level, change was demonstrated by women having a greater role in decision making in the home which has always been dominated by men and domestic duties which were previously the responsibility of wives are now shared. The position of women also improved, which was confirmed by husbands valuing their wives more and supporting them to be involved in activities outside of the home.

The second change was the change in the position of women in the community. Qualitatively, this change was quite significant and was visible from the increased role of women in decision making. Although this change began with the involvement of women in the ACCESS program, awareness of the rights of women to participate in public matters and increasing confidence of the women further impacted on their involvement in activities outside of ACCESS. This means that there was an internalization of values on the importance of the role of women at a community level and not just in the ACCESS program.

Another phenomena that emerged was a demand for women to take up public positions (and not just to be involved in activities), at the village and organizational level and so also be

involved in political matters and processes. This meant women getting involved as candidates for village heads or local village government members.

It can be said that the changes in gender cover both practical and strategic aspects. If you look at welfare and skills, the practical needs of both men and women in the community have been fulfilled. Fulfilling the practical needs of women has also had another effect. It has provided an opportunity to identify their strategic needs and to start to demand that they get fulfilled. However, it must be acknowledged that the basic changes that are related to more equal gender constructions must continue to be promoted. Besides that, a process that has a focus on women needs to be able to really advocate on the important issues that significantly impact on women and not just simply get women involved and taking up issues that do not represent the real issues for women.

The involvement of the poor has also created some clear changes. Previously, the poor were not involved in various activities and did not have credibility. Now, changes are evident where the poor are starting to get involved in decision making and, in some places, taking on roles within groups and even positions at the village level. Self confidence to become involved in public life has increased and opportunities that facilitate the involvement of the poor have been opened up.

### **4.3 Sustainability impacts**

In the impact evaluation study it was evident that both men and women in the community were confident that they are capable to continue the program initiatives themselves without mentoring. This confidence is based on several reasons that the community identified. The reasons were related to the regulations that the community made together on utilizing the group assets and having group boards that had the skills and knowledge to manage a group (including internal group administration). Indeed, it is still early to conclude that this competence to manage the assets will lead to a sustainable program. It is important to remember that the impact evaluation was done shortly after the program finished. There was an indication of problems with deposits and repayments in some of the loans groups, which highlighted that sustainability was still tenuous.

Many communities still lack confidence in sourcing out third party support and this must be considered as it is an influencing factor on program sustainability after mentoring has stopped. There is still a lot of dependence on the mentoring organisations to develop networks with third parties. Information and knowledge on potential third party support, how to access the support and where to look for it is still very limited.

### **4.4 Governance impacts**

Governance was not specifically evaluated in this study, however, we can reflect on various components of governance by looking at some of the other aspects evaluated such as skills, welfare and competence to maintain program sustainability. Activities that require management reflect the level of good governance, such as the division of duties within the board (for example chairperson, secretary, treasurer and technician). Good governance was also seen in transparency in financial reporting, which was disclosed to members and decision making was carried out together with members.

#### 4.4.1 How were impacts achieved?

There were a few key factors that clarify how the program impacts were achieved. The factors were:

- 1) A participative approach that “forced” or required the involvement of the program’s focus group (women and the poor) from the beginning until the end of the program. This had a great impact on both women and the poor as they were the program’s main beneficiaries.
- 2) Entry point of the program to assist the poor to improve their quality of life can be categorised as fulfilling practical needs. However, using an empowerment approach greatly contributed to the significant impact that occurred from the program. This can be explained as follows: when the poor must focus their attention and energy on survival issues and there is intervention that assists or facilitates making their life easier, then it can be said that that intervention is appropriate to their needs. Through “support” and an empowerment approach that increased the community’s capacity to manage the program, from assessment, implementation and to maintain sustainability has increased knowledge, skills (both technical and non technical) and in the end has provided them with skills to assist them to increase their quality of life.
- 3) Intensive mentoring/support using an empowerment approach (to avoid dependence). This means there is a process of increased capacity and technical and non technical assistance or mentoring (such as motivation) from the mentoring organization so the participants can implement the knowledge they obtained, always reflect on what has been implemented, have opportunities for discussions with the mentoring organization and get assistance from the mentors to develop relationships with third parties.
- 4) The program involved the community from the beginning which meant the entire community had a feeling of ownership and developed a sense of responsibility in the program. The sense of belonging and direct benefits the community got motivated them take care of the services they received so they could be ongoing. Out of this, arouse a new level of need or the desire to broaden the service targets. This cycle facilitates program sustainability to take place.
- 5) A clear program focus, that is, a focus on women and the poor using an empowerment approach. Such a focus always emphasizes that the issue or activity implemented must be in the interests of these two groups and involves them as well as provides the greatest benefits for them. This is balanced with an empowerment approach so that working with women and the poor is not just charitable but rather increases their own capacity to be competent to plan, manage and develop the program themselves and to keep it sustainable independently.
- 6) There was an integrated approach, in particular the community development and capacity building approaches. Capacity building was implemented through the capacity building program such as training on women leadership, generic

and specific capacity building so the CSO mentors could have a significant contribution to the program impact in the community.

- 7) The choice of appropriate service providers was seen from their capacity, skills and knowledge and also their level of commitment. The service provider, Mitra Samya, had the capacity to empower the community and facilitate internalisation of gender poverty inclusive values at various levels. This capacity came from Mitra Samya itself and was then developed by facilitating local or individual “service providers” in each district. This approach enabled suitable mentoring to be provided to the communities in their respective provinces. This was demonstrated by the high level of community satisfaction with the mentoring organizations.

#### **4.4.2 Why were impacts achieved**

Impacts were achieved through capacity building that resulted in increased skills and knowledge, widened perspectives and motivated the community to strive for change independently. This capacity building was supported by the following factors (in accordance to what the community stated as supporting or impeding factors):

- (1) Effective training, which is training that was suitable to the participants needs using skilled trainers. Training provides visible impacts if it is supported with post training follow up where knowledge from the training can be put into practice with the support of a facilitator. A lack of post training support/mentoring means that the training outcomes will be less significant. In addition, the training should always utilize the local resources available, such as assets (for example in the form of land) and local materials, which can support the participants to develop their knowledge and put it into practice.
- (2) A reflection process in the training is also needed in order to gain tangible impacts. The reflection process can be implemented in the form of a sharing of the learning outcomes with other group members who did not attend the training, learning from fellow boards from other areas (for example fellow LED boards) or learning from other community members such as neighbors. In principle, the learning process continues to impact on increased skills and knowledge. Methods that are seen as valuable are the training packet, comparative studies, work/training experience, discussions with speakers or informal discussions with the mentors. The group is very important for the learning process because an ongoing sharing process occurs in a group and it is a place to practice new skills and knowledge that has been obtained.
- (3) Activities in the CLAPP cycle supported increased knowledge and skills, such as being active in meetings, community led activities, leading meetings, attending program activities from the beginning till the end and provided opportunities to express opinions in meetings.
- (4) Internal factors such as the interest to learn and the desire to change. Previous experience also provides positive input and participant’s awareness that skills

will enable them to fulfill their own needs themselves, such as, if there is water, agricultural requirements for water will be met.

- (5) Networking with other parties that have expertise in their area, such as PPL, the Department of Animal Husbandry. If relationships with these parties are established within the framework of the program at the beginning, the community will then be able to maintain these relationships because they know it is beneficial, they already know where to go and who they need to contact.
- (6) There are regulations that mean that members are obliged to be involved in activities, particularly women and the poor.
- (7) Support from parties that are more able. This is an effect from an inclusive and not exclusive approach. This means that although the program is focused on women and the poor, it does not exclude other components of the community.
- (8) Effective mentoring from organisations, for example, mentoring in a relaxed manner so that participants feel free to express their opinions, using participative methods, providing intensive motivation and guidance, providing support during practicals and holding discussions often.
- (9) Discussions that create critical thinking, so that small “movements” emerge and start to question the injustices of practices that have always been seen as the norm ( for example in district workshops questions came up about the practice of “slaves”).
- (10) Activities that facilitate the re-construction of gender relations such as the training on gender and leadership and informal discussions.

## 5 Conclusion

The ACCESS program which used participatory and empowerment approaches with a focus on women and the poor demonstrated significant impacts that were obvious in several aspects of the program. There were very obvious impacts in two aspects, which were: firstly, gender relations within the family and at the community level and secondly, empowerment by improving the role of the poor in the community, increasing their self confidence to participate in village developments and the belief that the community is competent to maintain program sustainability.

Fulfilling the practical needs of the community, which was the entry point to empowerment, was effective in facilitating an empowerment process because the community directly felt the benefits. In theory and in reality, the poor are forced to expend their energy and attention on fulfilling their practical needs. Facilitating an increase in income (even though it was small) through the program opened up other opportunities for the community, such as, the opportunity to be actively involved in village developments. There were also direct benefits that contributed to participants feeling that they were a part of the program and being interested in making the program sustainable so they could continue to be enjoy the benefits.

The policy at the beginning that required a focus on women and the poor proved to be very effective in disseminating gender and poverty inclusive values and was supported by both families and village level institutes in the program. This means that various parties in the program internalised these values and third parties outside of the ACCESS program began to campaign for these two components of the community, who traditionally were marginalised.

An effort to re-construct gender roles was an important supporting factor because there were certain conditions that impeded the involvement of women. There were various reasons why women did not get involved, such as, they must have the support of their husband and family in order to be involved in programs. If there was no intervention to make husbands aware of this, then women clearly could not get involved. On the other hand, there was no one from the men's group who needed to get permission or support from their wives and families to be involved in the program. In addition, because the starting point for women is different from men, women require a more obvious and specific impetus to get involved. There also needs to be an emphasis that it is imperative that women get the opportunity to be actively involved.

Aside from the obstacles that women faced, in general women and the poor's experiences were similar. One of the main obstacles was that women did not have enough time to be involved in a program because they were too busy with domestic duties and trying to earn income and the poor were too busy trying to earn an income. The distance to the training and activities was also a major obstacle for both women and the poor. Program sensitivity to these specific conditions really assisted overcoming these two issues.

In general, gender analysis of the community's perception did not indicate any clear trends from the program impacts. The score levels on evaluating the program impacts demonstrated a difference in perception between men and women. However, it was difficult to make generalisations or come to a conclusion on factors that influenced the different perceptions between men and women across the districts. An analysis of differences needs to be carried out at the village level in order to be careful not to make generalisations or conclusions at higher levels (district) which can result in bias outcomes.

## **6 Lessons learnt**

- (1) The community empowerment program with a focus on women and the poor that was supported by integrated intervention that fulfilled the practical and strategic needs of the participants to initiate gender equality and equality among social classes was very effective in facilitating change and the program provided significant impacts.
- (2) The inclusive approach was most effective in developing a sense of having some ownership of the program among all groups and at all levels.
- (3) The empowerment program which provided significant capacity building for the community, boards and the mentoring organizations contributed to good program quality.
- (4) There were differences between the men and women in perceptions, interests and needs to the point that there needs to be a process where men and women could present their aspirations separately. This would also require a further process to give men and women an opportunity to mutually understand the other's

perspective. This could be accomplished through discussions at the plenary session level.

- (5) Clear program regulations or policies that focus on certain groups (in this case women and the poor) that are consistently applied in order to facilitate the internalisation of the values by various parties concerned.

## **7 Recommendations for Future Programming**

- (1) The design of the empowerment program with a gender poverty inclusive focus should strengthen an integrated approach (practical and strategic needs) where the community can gain an awareness of their rights and responsibilities as a citizen. Fulfilling practical needs with an empowerment approach becomes a base for the community to apply what they have learnt and is also a media that strengthens the community at a basic level. This also assists the community to rapidly improve their quality of life in a tangible way.
- (2) Internalisation of the gender poverty inclusive values needs to be ongoing and implemented at all levels. If previous programs have not involved community figures, both formal and informal in capacity building, then future programs need to involve them, so that changes that take place in the community are not impeded or rejected by the village elite.
- (3) The mentoring design must clearly demonstrate intensive mentoring in the field (which starts from the process where the community learns new things, implements them and then reflects on them). The mentoring must then be reduced gradually in order to prepare the community to manage the program independently and sustain it themselves.
- (4) Intervention or capacity building for networking and lobbying must be increased because at present there is no clear design for it in the program. Investment in networking and lobbying capacity building, which is beneficial at the grass roots level is lacking.