

Overcoming Barriers to Leadership for Women in Indonesia

The Role of Civil Society
Organisations

The
Gender
Equity
Initiative



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Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Melbourne acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the unceded land on which we work, learn and live: the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong peoples (Burnley, Fishermans Bend, Parkville, Southbank and Werribee campuses), the Yorta Yorta Nation (Dookie and Shepparton campuses), and the Dja Dja Wurrung people (Creswick campus).

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Executive Summary

This report explores the barriers and pathways for women's leadership in Indonesia, focusing on the role of women-led Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in empowering women and advancing gender equality. Indonesian women face significant challenges, including cultural expectations of balancing professional and household responsibilities and limited access to leadership roles.

Family support, especially among middle- and upper-class women, can also help overcome some of these barriers, particularly when domestic help is available to lighten work-family burdens. In Indonesia, women-led CSOs are one of the key players in advancing women's leadership through targeted mentorship and capacity-building programs, as well as through the advocacy of policy reforms. These organisations can fill this gap for individual women in opportunities for leadership with the necessary resources and platforms. However, despite their critical role, women-led CSOs remain underrecognised.

The report categorises women-led CSOs in Indonesia into four areas: **geography, area of impact, target audience, and network availability**. It highlights the wide disparity between urban and rural organisations, the importance of capacity-building, and the need for targeted advocacy and awareness campaigns. Women-led CSOs can target professional women, grassroots organisations, and the empowerment of youth as basic needs toward the end of women's leadership across sectors as well. **There is a significant lack of data on the impact of women-led CSOs**, given the large number of grassroots organisations operating in isolation and not getting much-needed attention and resources. A centralised database of women-led CSOs is important in garnering information for their impact and collaboration across networks.

This report recommends centralising data on CSOs of women, investing in these organisations specific to their categories and needs, and supporting them in a strategic approach. Investments in rural-based and urban-based CSOs should meet the specific needs related to capacity building, networking, and targeted advocacy efforts, depending on their categories. By making these investments, stakeholders can create a more supportive ecosystem for women's leadership development in Indonesia. By investing in and recognising these organisations, Indonesia can create an enabling and supportive environment for women to move into leading positions and thereby build up a wider network of active leading women for creating societal change.

1. Introduction

The gender gap in Indonesia is one of the most pressing issues, especially regarding women assuming major leadership positions. While much progress has taken place with education and work participation, women remain highly underrepresented at the senior leadership and decision-making levels. This disparity is due to gender bias, lack of resources, and work-family problems, which create barriers for women to rise into positions of leadership. The absence of women not only limits their opportunities but also hinders the growth of the country due to a lack of diverse viewpoints on governance and leadership. The research question addressed in this report is: How can women-led civil society organisations (CSOs) effectively address the barriers to women's leadership in Indonesia, and what strategies are necessary to enhance their impact in empowering women? This report will further analyse the current landscape of women's leadership, the barriers that aspiring female leaders face, and the important role women-led CSOs have played in empowering women in Indonesia. By focusing on the categorisation of these organisations, the report aims to highlight the need for centralised data collection and targeted investment strategies that address the unique challenges faced by women in various sectors.

1.1 Current Landscape

Census data on Women in Executive leadership indicates that only 15% of the executive leadership roles are held by women in 2021. This figure did not change between 2019 and 2021. Additionally, only 4% of women CEOs work for companies listed on the Indonesian Stock Exchange. Overall, only 21% of the companies in Indonesia have achieved gender balance (IBCWE, 2023). In the 2023 Global Gender Gap Index (World Economic Forum, 2023), Indonesia ranks 73rd out of 146 countries. This represents a comparatively strong position given the challenges that women in Indonesia encounter in attaining leadership roles across various sectors. In terms of Economic Participation and Opportunity, women have achieved 66.6% equality with men. However, the proportion of women in senior official roles has dropped from 55% to 31.7%, while the percentage of women in technical jobs has increased from 40.1% to over 50%. For Political Empowerment, women hold 18.1% of the power, with 21.6% of parliamentarians and 20.7% of ministers being women. Additionally, when it comes to local government, only 15.7% of local leaders in Indonesia are women (IBCWE, 2023).

By constitution, Indonesia does not discriminate against women. Indonesia has ratified most international human rights instruments that prohibit discrimination against women. Although the 1945 Constitution

does not specifically address sex or gender-based discrimination, it does prohibit discrimination on any grounds. Law No. 39/1999 on Human Rights also dedicates a special section to women's rights. It recognises women's rights as human rights (Article 45), guarantees women's representation in all branches of government (Article 46), ensures women's right to education at all levels (Article 48), and protects women's rights to work and fair treatment in the workplace (Article 49) (Komnas HAM Indonesia, 2024). However, social norms remain a significant barrier for women in Indonesia. Traditional social roles and gender norms, such as family-related barriers and organisational-related barriers, still limit women's participation in the formal workforce and in leadership positions in Indonesia (Kholis, 2017).

1.2 Why are women in leadership positions important?

Gender equity in the workplace is essential, not only due to fairness and justice but also to improve business outcomes. Achieving gender parity in leadership allows women to participate in decisions that shape the world, giving them equal access to power (Hill et al., 2016). An ILO survey (2020) reveals that gender equality and diversity in workplaces boost productivity, profitability, talent attraction and retention, creativity, and innovation. They also enhance brand reputation and improve understanding of consumer demand (IBCWE, 2023).

In Indonesia, women surpass men in education and expand their skills in STEM fields. They are highly trained and increasingly active in the workforce. However, their career advancement is affected by biases that impact hiring, promotions, work assignments, and mobility (ILO, 2022). Despite high motivation and a strong willingness to act, they face barriers on multiple levels, starting from individual, organisational, and even structural barriers that hold them back from realising their full potential.

2. Barriers to Women Leadership

Current literature on barriers to women's leadership mainly focuses on barriers at the structural, organisational, and individual levels. Structurally, cultural stereotypes are ingrained from early childhood, shaping behaviours and expectations. This socialisation influences children's understanding of their roles as they grow into adulthood, guiding them towards predefined paths (Yousaf and Schmiede, 2017). At the organisational level, Indonesian women face significant obstacles that hinder their career progression, particularly into leadership roles. These include sex discrimination, a masculine culture that favours male leaders, leading to prejudice against women aspiring for leadership, and the lack of policies or facilities to

support women in balancing work and family responsibilities (Kholis, 2017). On the individual level, Indonesian women also experience a lack of political ambition and confidence where they tend to avoid political conflicts and challenges, and lack of confidence due to minority status and being underrepresented in both numbers and seniority, making it difficult for them to reach top leadership positions (Kholis, 2017).

According to Chisholm-Burns et al. (2017), there are six key barriers against women in leadership roles. First is gender bias, second is the lack of mentality to pursue leadership, third is a lack of mentors, role models and sponsors, fourth is the lack of policies that support work-life balance, fifth is the “lean-out phenomenon”, and lastly is the lack of internal and external networks, recognitions, opportunities and resources. In the following sections, these barriers are divided into three categories: individual—lack of confidence, organisational—lack of resources including networks and mentors, and structural—lack of support due to patriarchal views on work and family. I will now discuss about it in the context of Indonesia.

2.1 Gender bias and lack of confidence

Because of pervasive gender biases, stereotypes, and a lack of adequate organisational responses to these issues, many women hesitate to pursue leadership roles or doubt their own skills or personality for such positions. Compared to men, women often take fewer career risks and may participate less in formal leadership training and activities (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017). Many women in urban Indonesia, in particular, have internalised their identity as leaders, demonstrating their ability to develop a positive self-concept in leadership (Riantoputra & Gatari, 2017), though it cannot be said the same in rural areas.

A 2024 IBCWE survey on opportunities for women returning to work after career breaks as primary caregivers revealed that 98.5% of respondents were interested in returning to their careers, highlighting a strong drive among women to re-enter the workforce. However, many women who took maternity leave or time off for caregiving faced hesitation about resuming work, feeling a “double burden”—the pressure to handle both professional and domestic responsibilities. Although they naturally embrace motherhood, these women often feel disadvantaged compared to colleagues who haven’t paused their careers (Anggahegari & Lantu, 2015). This challenge ties directly to structural and organisational issues: traditional patriarchal views pressure women to fulfil domestic roles, and workplaces often lack support systems that enable women to balance professional and family responsibilities. Even when women choose to take on both roles, this choice is heavily shaped by external societal pressures.

Studies have also shown that Indonesian women in successful careers typically exhibit strong self-perception, leadership aspirations, and a commitment to succeed. Yet other research highlights that many women lack the confidence or ambition to pursue senior leadership roles (McLaren, Star & Widianingsih, 2019). For Indonesian women, their identity as women is often seen as separate from their identity as leaders. However, research also finds that the more positively women leaders perceive their gender, the less identity conflict they experience. In essence, when women feel secure in their identity, they face less internal conflict about their roles (Primagita & Riantoputra, 2019). This underscores that women can indeed lead confidently, but much depends on whether they operate in environments that are free from gender roles and stereotypes, work-family conflict, and organisational structure. Further, research from multicultural urban areas in Indonesia suggests that leader identity is shaped not by gender but by the traits and skills of the leaders themselves (Riantoputra & Gatari, 2017).

2.2 Lack of resources: Networks and Mentors

Women in Indonesia face significant challenges, particularly in accessing resources that men, who often favour one another in professional settings, typically have. This phenomenon, known as homo-sociability, reinforces favouritism and comfort in choosing male leaders, creating a bias toward male leadership in senior management roles. Even women who achieve senior roles in Indonesia's public sector are often influenced by this preference for male leaders (McLaren, Star, and Widianingsih, 2019). Research indicates that women may lack access to mentors and sponsors, especially female mentors, which are essential for career growth. This lack of mentorship and sponsorship can hinder women uniquely (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017). Similarly, in Indonesia, female professionals often have limited access to both formal and informal mentoring and support for promotion (McLaren, Star, and Widianingsih, 2019).

Dewi and Rachmawati (2014) found that networking is crucial for leadership success among women. Informal networks are essential to becoming a leader in Indonesia; however, male managers and executives generally have more extensive networks, engage in more social and work interactions with senior leaders, and thus may have an advantage in securing higher-level positions (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017). Unfortunately, such networks are less accessible to women in Indonesia. However, many successful Indonesian businesswomen overcome this gap by joining diverse organisations, including professional, industry, and community groups, where they gain visibility, expand their networks, and build support systems (Dewi and Rachmawati, 2014). The lack of female role models can make young women hesitant to approach senior women for guidance. Dewi and Rachmawati (2014) emphasise that both formal and

informal leadership development programs are critical, as they provide women with essential skills and behaviours needed to succeed as leaders.

2.3 Work-Family Issues

Balancing work and family responsibilities often delays women from advancing in their careers, sometimes forcing them to choose between family life and professional aspirations. Women in Indonesia's tertiary institutions face particular challenges in attaining top leadership despite low discrimination levels (Cahyati et al., 2021). Even though women have the same formal opportunities as men to become leaders, they are still limited by major obstacles, such as family responsibilities that are often held by women. Women's participation in discussions often reinforced the notion of men's importance over women in work and family life. For example, women tend to prioritise family over career, agreeing that their roles as caregivers could interfere with leadership responsibilities (McLaren, Star, and Widianingsih, 2019). Career women in Indonesia frequently face challenges balancing work and family, with the presence of young children and spousal expectations creating barriers to career progression. Some women require their spouse's permission to pursue opportunities, such as further studies or leadership roles, whereas men do not face similar limitations (Kholis, 2017). Child-rearing duties significantly delay women's professional advancement, and leadership roles are often avoided due to the perception that these roles require too much time, potentially leading to family neglect (Kholis, 2017).

However, work-family issues are not always a hindrance for women. For instance, social support plays a crucial role in enhancing career women's psychological well-being (Rabbani and Yuniardi, 2024). According to an IBCWE (2024) survey, women need support from both their domestic and workplace environments. This includes assistance with family caregiving and flexibility in work arrangements to better manage both family and career responsibilities. The conflict between work and family roles is closely linked to the support women receive from their environment. Family members, especially spouses, provide critical emotional and practical support, with husbands often sharing household responsibilities. Families also offer motivation, a listening ear, and comfort during stressful times (Rabbani and Yuniardi, 2024).

3. Successful Women Leaders: Lessons Learned

Successful women leaders in Indonesia possess three critical components: confidence, resources such as networks and mentorship, and family support. However, the prominent barrier for women is the scarcity of

female role models, sponsors, and mentors who can guide and inspire emerging female leaders (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017). Without visible examples of women attaining leadership roles, aspiring women leaders may struggle to envision themselves in these positions, limiting their own leadership aspirations. This highlights the importance of women in leadership positions serving as role models and mentors for other women. While support from the workplace is beneficial, Indonesian culture expects women to manage both professional and household responsibilities to maintain a career, underscoring the value of family support in career advancement (McLaren, Star and Widianingsih, 2019). Family support, in particular, is often essential for women both in advancing their leadership journey and accessing leadership roles in the first place (Riantoputra & Gatari, 2017). Women from middle- and upper-class backgrounds were more likely to advance in their careers due to two main factors: (1) they could afford higher education, and (2) they had the means to hire domestic help if family support was unavailable. Women with these resources were better able to progress to senior leadership roles, even in cases where they needed to relocate, as paid domestic help allowed them to pursue their careers without domestic limitations (McLaren, Star and Widianingsih, 2019). To address the primary barriers faced by women, it is essential to examine the factors that have enabled successful female leaders to thrive. Understanding the advantages that facilitated their success can help inform strategies to make these resources accessible to a wider population of women. Women-led CSOs have significant potential to expand access to these resources, yet their contributions are often underrepresented.

4. Women-led Civil Society Organisations

4.1 Importance of Women-Led CSOs

Civil society can play a key role in progressing social rights and can provide a space for diverse voices around issues of gender, identity, and rights equality (Chaney, 2016). The United Nations defines Civil Society Organisations as “Non-State, not-for-profit, voluntary entities formed by people in the social sphere that are separate from the State and the market. CSOs represent a wide range of interests and ties. They can include community-based organisations as well as non-governmental organisations.”(UN, 2024). Women-led CSOs facilitate women’s access to decision-making positions by providing specific support and resources. Mentorship programs, leadership training, and capacity-building initiatives are some of the ways these organisations enable women, equipping women with skills and confidence. Women-led CSOs can also advocate for policy changes and workplace practices that promote gender equality and create

supportive environments for female leadership. Women-led CSOs help bridge the gap between individual women and leadership opportunities, ensuring they have access to the tools, knowledge, and platforms necessary to excel in professional and decision-making roles.

4.2 Women-led CSO in Indonesia

Diprose (2023) explains that women-led CSOs in Indonesia play a vital role in empowering women; these CSOs can act as brokers by strengthening organisational structures and providing women with access to resources and knowledge that enhance their influence and capacity, which helps women build political skills and gain practical advice for interacting with the State (Diprose, 2023). Unfortunately, there is a lack of data on women-led CSOs, particularly from a grassroots perspective. The author also encountered challenges in finding information on women-led CSOs in Indonesia, as direct fieldwork is often required to gather the data and information. Most studies focus on the relationship between CSOs and the State and on increasing lobbying capacity with the government, overlooking other roles that women-led CSOs play beyond state oversight and policy advocacy. In Indonesia, a society deeply rooted in community, there is a foundational expression of unity and mutual support in achieving community goals and assisting individuals—characteristic of Indonesian “village culture” (Slikkerveer, 2019). Indonesia has an established network of CSOs committed to supporting women and promoting gender equality nationwide. Examples of these organisations and their initiatives will be partially outlined in the following section, categorised into four distinct categories.

4.3 Women-led CSO in Indonesia Categorisation

Given the empowering nature of CSOs and communities for women, the government and policymakers should carefully plan collaborations and investments with the right organisations and approaches. Although each women’s organisation has its unique qualities, it is essential for the government and funders to conduct assessments before investing to ensure that the impact is clear and measurable. Is the organisation located in an urban or rural area? What is the category of impact—policy influence, advocacy, or capacity building? A measurable impact will lead to a clearer influence overall. That said, CSOs are inherently unique and may not always fit neatly into categories. Categorising women-led CSOs based on geography, area of impact, target audience, and network availability facilitates a clearer understanding of the focus areas and activities of women-led CSOs in Indonesia.

Category	Type	Organisation Example
Geography	Urban based	Large student movement organisations such as BEM (Student Alliance), HMI, legal aid institutions in major cities, Feminist Lawyer Club, etc.
	Rural based	Palembang Women's Association, Sekato Women's Union, Jambi Women's Union, etc.
	National organisations	Aisiyah, Dharma Wanita Association, Lentera Sintas Indonesia, etc.
Area of impact	Policy-making	Indonesian Women's Political Caucus, Dharma Wanita Association, student movement organisations, etc.
	Advocacy and awareness	Press networks such as AJI (Alliance of Independent Journalists), Konde.co, Magdalene, etc.
	Capacity building	empower.id, WEWAW (We Empower Women At Work), Yayasan Kusuma Buana, etc.
Target audience	Grassroot organisation	Aisiyah, Jambi Women's Union, etc.
	Professional	WEWAW (We Empower Women at Work), Indonesia Business Coalition for Women (IBCWE), etc.
	Youth empowerment	empower.id, girlsbeyond.id, Student Alliance (BEM), HMI
Network availability	Standalone	Persatuan Wanita Jambi, rural-based organisations, etc.
	Having network	Aisiyah, Dharma Wanita Association, Feminist Lawyer Club, and other organisations that have connections with the UN.

Table 1. Women-led CSO Categorisation

4.3.1 Geography

Women-led CSOs need to be categorised based on their geographical focus, as there are significant differences between women's organisations in urban and rural areas. The first category includes urban-based women-led CSOs, which focus on issues specific to cities, such as employment rights, urban development, and gender-based violence in urban settings; some examples are large student movement organisations such as BEM (Student Alliance), HMI, legal aid institutions in major cities, Feminist Lawyer Club, etc. The second category includes rural-based organisations, which address challenges faced by women in rural areas. Rural communities vary greatly in how women can exert influence due to unique local power structures. National and local power structures intersect with gender norms in different ways across communities, leading to varied outcomes for women in different regions (Diprose, 2023). Rural women-led CSOs are typically more grassroots-based, focusing on empowering women alongside practical interventions that support rural women, especially marginalised groups such as Palembang Women's Association, Sekato Women's Union, Jambi Women's Union, etc. Finally, there are national organisations that cover multiple areas or the entire country, focusing on broader issues without a strict focus on urban or rural settings, such as Aisyiyah, Dharma Wanita Association, Lentera Sintas Indonesia, etc. With the advancement of technology and information, women's communities are now more open, allowing them to reach women across various regions and not necessarily focusing only on urban or rural problems.

4.3.2 Area of Impact

Civil society organisations in Indonesia support gender equality through three main roles: 1) building the capacity of individuals and groups through training, education, and mentorship; 2) expanding advocacy and protecting women's rights by promoting social, economic, and legal reforms; and 3) promoting democratic values such as participation, equality, transparency, and accountability within communities (Bahagijo et al., 2022). Based on this research, the author categorises the impact areas of women-led CSOs into three categories. The first is capacity-building CSOs, which empower women by providing skills training, education, mentorship, and leadership development for economic and social empowerment, such as empower.id, WEWAW (We Empower Women At Work), Yayasan Kusuma Buana, etc. The second category includes CSOs focused on raising awareness of women's issues, such as gender-based violence, reproductive rights, and education, through campaigns, events, and media; some examples are press networks such as AJI (Alliance of Independent Journalists), Konde.co, Magdalene, etc. Lastly, there are CSOs focused on advocating for changes in laws, policies, and regulations to advance women's rights, such

as legal equality and political participation, such as the Indonesian Women's Political Caucus, Dharma Wanita Association, student movement organisations, etc.

4.3.3 Target Audience

This category depends on the target audience of the women-led CSO. Grassroots organisations in Indonesia work closely with local communities to address immediate, localised needs for women. These organisations often operate in rural settings, where they focus on practical, community-centred support. An example of such an organisation is Aisyiyah, which prioritises grassroots initiatives tailored to the specific needs of women in rural areas. Aisyiyah describes itself as “a social justice organisation with a national structure, working in provinces at the district, sub-district, and village levels, with women in every position: in economic, social protection, education, health, and women's literacy” (McKay, 2016). This organisation focuses specifically on creating programs that address the needs of grassroots women. The second category includes professional and leadership networks that support women in leadership roles, career advancement, and representation in decision-making. By promoting professional growth and networking, these organisations aim to enhance women's representation across various sectors. Examples include WEWAW (We Empower Women at Work) and the Indonesia Business Coalition for Women (IBCWE), both of which foster environments where women can thrive professionally and assume leadership roles. Lastly, youth and next-generation empowerment organisations focus on young women, girls, and adolescents, providing them with the education, leadership development, and advocacy skills needed to shape future generations. This category includes organisations such as empower.id, girlsbeyond.id, and youth-driven alliances like the Student Alliance (BEM) and the Islamic Student Association (HMI). However, one organisation can have more than one target audience, and it is not limited.

4.3.4. Network Practices

Network availability is one factor that strengthens women's civil society organisations (CSOs). For example, isolated “standalone” organisations may be weaker and easier for political elites to sideline or defeat compared to coordinated action from multiple CSOs (Chaney, 2016). When a CSO has strong networking practices, it benefits from additional advantages such as better resources and institutional capacity (Chaney, 2016). One good example is Aisyiyah, the first women's community organisation working for cervical and breast cancer screenings and family planning services. In this case, they are able to use their networks to secure funds in local government and village budgets, partnering with the private sector, and raising funds through the Gerakan Infaq Sayang Ibu (GISI) initiative with LazisMu and Baznas (UN Women,

2018). In Papua Province, village-level working groups have been established to address violence against women and children, with support from UNFPA, UN Women, and UNICEF (UN Women, 2018). However, many standalone women-CSOs remain undetected and lack access to networks. Even in the UN Voluntary Peer Review (UN VPR), many women-led CSOs remain either unengaged or uninformed about their country's VPR process (UN Women, 2018). This indicates how many women-led CSOs are often invisible due to a gap in information flow and networks.

4.4 Lack of Data on Women-led CSOs

Data from the network of partners of the National Commission on Violence Against Women shows that there is only a total of 60 partner organisations to the commission (Komnas Perempuan, 2024). This is surprising since the actual number of women-led CSOs is higher than that. For example, according to the Public Information Disclosure website of West Sumatra Province, there are 93 women's organisations in West Sumatra alone, not including those in the other 34 provinces of Indonesia. More in-depth research is needed to examine the variety and number of grassroots women's organisations in Indonesia and to make sure they are all accounted for and seen. Many other organisations that may have a significant impact in their respective areas are not yet registered as partners or are undetected by the government or academics due to their lack of access to resources, such as connections and networking opportunities with the government. To fill in this gap, the SMERU Research Institute has created a database of NGOs, which currently lists a total of 255 women-focused NGOs in Indonesia (SMERU Research Institute, 2024). However, not all of these organisations concentrate solely on women's issues; many also study gender-related topics without focusing exclusively on them, as is the case with the SMERU Research Institute itself.

With a comprehensive database of women-focused CSOs and appropriate categorisation, the impact of these organisations could be more significant. Policymakers should undertake comprehensive research on the presence and contributions of women-led CSOs and investigate strategies to optimise their impact. These women-led CSOs in Indonesia can play a significant role in facilitating pathways for women to reach positions of leadership. Assuring the facilitation of using women-led CSOs in addressing the barriers to women's leadership can be addressed through their network linkages, their capacities to advocate, and programs centred on communities. These CSOs could provide mentorships, skill-building programs that respond to women's particular needs, or act as platforms for knowledge-sharing and awareness campaigns to challenge societal norms and biases that limit women's potential, or they may engage in policy advocacy to push for regulations that support gender equality in leadership roles.

If women-led CSOs can partner with government bodies, private sector players, and educational institutions, they will be able to facilitate more inclusive environments and develop opportunities for women to overcome the barriers to reach leadership positions.

5. Recommendations

5.1 The need for centralised data collection for women-led CSOs

The development of a comprehensive database for women-led CSOs will help improve the visibility and performance of women-led CSOs in Indonesia. Most of the women's organisations currently operate in silos. A centralised database would provide an overview of the different women-led CSOs throughout Indonesia, helping stakeholders to more effectively identify the existing gaps and needs. Systematic categorisation of CSOs, based on geographical focus, areas of impact, target audiences, and network availability, will help policymakers and researchers to understand the landscape and issues of women-led CSOs in Indonesia. Having a centralised source of information would enhance the capacity for research and data-driven decision-making, ultimately allowing for a more strategic approach to supporting women's leadership and empowerment initiatives in Indonesia.

It is important for stakeholders to conduct thorough research and compile detailed studies to facilitate the categorisation of women-led CSOs. The development of a comprehensive and extensive database, similar to the survey conducted by the SMERU Institute, is essential. This process might take a considerable amount of time due to the large number of women-led CSOs in Indonesia, and there will inevitably be some that remain unreachable; however, if there is collaboration between the government, local governments, research bodies—whether governmental or independent—and other stakeholders, this database of women-led CSOs can certainly be compiled and categorised effectively.

5.2 The need for investment in women-led CSOs according to their categories and needs

The central and local governments of Indonesia, along with potential grant funders such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and multinational foundations that focus on women's issues, should allocate appropriate investments to women-led CSOs. These investments should be informed by a thorough categorisation and analysis of the specific needs and areas of focus of these organisations in the future. For example, for the Palembang Women's Association, which falls into the rural-based category and has an

area of impact in capacity building, as they are a grassroots organisation and also lack a network, the assistance provided by the government or potential grant funders should be training and good networking, rather than simply injecting funds for their growth. Another example is Konde.co, which is an urban-based organisation because it focuses on women's issues in urban areas. It is a member of the press network focused on advocacy and awareness, targeting audiences from professionals to youth empowerment, and has connections in the media but lacks connections to grassroots in rural areas. Appropriate assistance would include funding injections to enable them to continue operating independently and advocate for women's voices, especially from rural areas. This categorisation will enable a more in-depth look into the needs of the women-led CSOs, hence making it easier for the government and relevant stakeholders to understand their needs better in efforts towards achieving greater impact

6. Conclusion

Women-led CSOs facilitate women's access to decision-making positions by providing specific support and resources such as mentorship programs, leadership training, and capacity-building initiatives, which can help women in Indonesia making resources that are limited only to few women—confidence, access to networks and resources, and work-family support—more available for wider groups of women. Indonesia can utilise the numerous existing women-led CSOs that already exist with a mission to support women and promote gender equality nationwide by making targeted investments that align with the specific needs of each type of women-led CSO. Supporting women-led CSOs will not only strengthen their capacities to empower women but also create an enabling environment where women's voices are heard and valued. The collective effort will eventually build a more solid network of women leaders who will be influential in creating change to inspire future generations. It is important to invest in these organisations to create enabling ecosystems for the development of women's leadership in Indonesia.

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