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Building Women's Resilience through urban climate policies: an example from Indonesia

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*The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

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Introduction:

Cities in developing countries, including Indonesia, are struggling to handle their problems like growing urbanization and increasing inequality, competing for space for living, business, and leisure, insufficient essential basic services like water, power, health, and sanitation, particularly for poor communities, bad traffics and transportation system, and poor waste management. Climate disasters and crises exacerbate the urban problems. Urban poor communities living with poor access to social services are vulnerable to climate change and response measures because they do not have any means to respond to or avoid climate threats or disasters like floods, sea-level rise, typhoons, and droughts. In this situation, the most affected are the poor women.

On the other hand, cities contribute to global warming. According to the UN, cities are the major contributors to climate change. They consume 78 percent of the world's energy and produce more than 60 percent of greenhouse gas emissions¹. Thus, urban climate change policies are crucial for resilience against impacts and threats of climate change, and as well as for reducing greenhouse gasses. The communities, particularly women, have to be involved in policy-making at the urban and national levels. Otherwise, the urban climate response measures will add to the problems of communities already affected by climate change, as their experiences show.

Building women's resilience through urban climate policies is not simply about creating a resilience program. This effort has to consider various aspects related to the complexity of cities, the experiences of people living in the cities, and the national climate policy frameworks that shaped the urban climate policies.

This paper showcases the experiences of women in four cities in Indonesia, i.e., Jakarta, Makassar, Yogyakarta, and Jember, encountering national and urban climate mitigation and adaptation policies and measures developed at the national and cities level. Some recommendations are tabled for achieving gender-transformative national and urban policies that increase resilience and at the same time reduce emissions.

The lesson learned from Indonesia would provide a picture of the complexity of aspects for consideration in building women's resilience through urban climate change policies.

Women bear the brunt of climate disasters, climate crises, and its response measures

When we asked women in those four Indonesian cities about their dream cities, we would receive a long list of ideas. Examples of answers we received from our consultations with community women and even women working in the city governments were following: affordable housing; free from floods; cheap water and electricity fees; spatial equity; many green public open spaces and trees; land for rice fields, urban farming and city gardens; safe playgrounds for children; neighborhood libraries; children can go to school by bicycles; bicycle paths; safe, clean and affordable public transport; public transportation that is friendly for peoples with disabilities, aging people and pregnant women; safe public roads and good lightning during the nights; well-organized public parking areas; utilize rivers for transports; organic markets; specific places designated for street vendors; good domestic and industrial waste management; free from eviction; and so on, the list can continue.

¹ United Nations, Cities and Local Actions, Cities and Pollution, at: <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/climate-solutions/cities-pollution>

Those women's ideas reflected their wishes for changes in the cities where they are living now. Those are precisely the real problems that many cities in Indonesia are encountering, among others expensive housing and living; expansion of slums areas; bad traffic and air pollution; lack of cheap, healthy, and safe public transports; lack of safe, healthy, and pleasant surroundings for women and children.

In recent years climate disasters and crises exacerbated this situation. Indonesia is an archipelago with around 17,508 islands² under the equator, which only has two seasons throughout the year: the dry season from the month of April to October and the rainy season from October to April.

Indonesian cities in the coastal areas like Jakarta and Makassar have to deal with floods every year during the rainy season. Water from the overflowing rivers due to heavy rainfalls and tidal floods from sea-level rise trap the communities and their lives in the middle. Poor waste management in cities with people's bad habit of throwing garbage into the rivers causes rivers quickly to overflow when rains come. The burden of taking care of the family members during floods in temporary shelters and any other places that they can go during floods, still falls on women.

On the other hand, when the dry season comes and causes prolonged droughts due to climate change, then clean water is lacking. The city water service is dysfunctional and expensive. Hence, many poor households have to buy water from private vendors. Not only this situation increases the household expenses, but also the domestic work of women. Since providing water in the household under the patriarchal norms is a role of women, then they are the ones who have to walk further away to buy water and carry jerry cans of water home.

Climate response measures that increase the domestic burden of women

Some cities developed environmental programs for communities that are sometimes also claimed as climate mitigation measures. Two usual programs that we can find in Indonesian cities are the alley gardening program and the waste bank program.

The alley gardening program is part of the urban farming concept to make the dirty alleys clean, green, and pleasant by decorating the walls, putting plant pots, or planting the small lands along with ornamental, herbal, and medicinal plants. So, the households will have their ingredients for cooking or home remedies.

Women living in the alleys are usually assigned for this program to decorate the alleys, plant seedlings, and take care of the plants. The notion of domestic care work of women can apply to take care of the plants and their alleys, is the basis to assign women for this task. Hence, this program will not succeed if women do not contribute their time and efforts to planting and taking care of the plants. However, the program does not educate involved women about climate change, nor inform them that their work contributes to cities' climate mitigation efforts. Women involved in this program do not receive any reward nor recognition. So, their work is invisible. On the other hand, women's household burden increases, also their household expenses, particularly during droughts. It is because the cities provide one-time support only for seedlings in this program. The rest is in the hands of the women. The involved women have to manage the

² [Kompas.com](https://www.kompas.com), "Letak dan Luas Indonesia", at: <https://www.kompas.com/skola/read/2020/05/22/193000869/letak-dan-luas-indonesia?page=all>.

program by their own efforts like buying containers for plants, fertilizers, and water, and other decorative items. The poor households have to buy water to water the plants despite having difficulties getting water for their daily household needs.

Some cities developed a waste management program for communities called the waste bank. The waste bank is more of a place used to collect waste that has been selected from the households and sorted by volunteers for later sale to bigger collectors or producers of handicrafts made from recycled goods³. This domestic waste recycling program aims to improve the life quality of urban environments in general, increase awareness among public cleanliness and waste management, and reduce emissions. This program involves women mostly in sorting and recycling waste based on the notion that managing domestic waste is the work of women. Men are reluctant to join the program because they do not want to do women's work, and the money from this waste bank is considered too little for men to intervene.

Women receive income from the waste bank and contribute to the household income. On the other hand, their household burden increases since they have to work at home and in the waste bank. Many women have to do their domestic work first before going to the waste bank, and in-between have to pick children from school. Moreover, the women are not well informed about the linkages of this waste bank program to climate change since there is no climate awareness program developed for women. Similarly, the women involved in this waste bank program that is also claimed as climate mitigation programs, are not informed that they contribute to the city's climate mitigation measure for waste management, their contribution is not recognized, hence, invisible. The program has not yet involved other vulnerable groups, such as disability groups.

Another program that many cities conduct is the expansion of green open space as climate mitigation and adaptation measures and also to meet the requirement of Law Number 26 of 2007 on Spatial Planning. The law rules that every city must have a minimum of 30% Green Open Space, of which 20% is public green open space and 10% private green open space⁴. The regional regulations concerning the spatial planning of the cities stipulate the allocation of 30% of the green open space⁵. This proportion aims to ensure the balance of the urban ecosystem, both the hydrological system and the microclimate, as well other ecological systems that can increase the availability of clean air needed by the community, open space for public activities, and the aesthetic value of the city.

Many cities lost their green open space due to rigorous development for infrastructure, housing, offices, and business such as hotels and malls. Many poor people occupied river banks for their shelters. The easier way to expand the green open space is by evicting poor communities living in slums along the river banks to reclaim the water catchment areas occupied by the slums instead of the powerful businesses that also occupied public lands. The city governments have not enforced the laws against those who built business buildings in public green open spaces.

Many poor women in cities' slums suffered evictions due to the expansion of the green open space program. The lives of the displaced people are apprehensive because of the loss of jobs and income, no place to live, lack or even loss of access to food, clean water, and education for

³ Kanwil DJPb NTB, Kementerian Keuangan Indonesia, Bank Sampah dan Penguatan Ekonomi Desa, 28 Januari 2020 at: <https://djp.kemenkeu.go.id/kanwil/ntb/id/data-publikasi/artikel/2897-bank-sampah-dan-penguatan-ekonomi-desa.html>

⁴ Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia no. 26 tahun 2007 tentang Penataan Ruang, at: <https://jdih.kemenkeu.go.id/fullText/2007/26TAHUN2007UU.htm>

⁵ P2KH, Strategi Peningkatan Ruang Terbuka Hijau, 27 March 2016, at: <http://sim.ciptakarya.pu.go.id/p2kh/knowledge/detail/strategi-peningkatan-ruang-terbuka-hijau>

their children. Those who move to a rented apartment provided by the government, are no less frustrated. The increased spending on house rent, transportation to school, and health services face a situation of declining income due to losing their jobs. The fear of being evicted again from the apartment continues to haunt them⁶.

In this situation, women experience the heaviest burden. Gender construction that positions women in charge of household work causes evicted women to become even more burdened. On the other hand, gender construction that places men as the head of the family and decision-makers in the private and public sphere causes women to be excluded from any cities' decisions related to their own and family life.

The patriarchy norms among the national and local decision-makers created climate policies and actions that neglected the situation of women in climate change and its response measures. There are policies at the national level that rule the implementation of gender mainstreaming and other gender considerations. However, the policymakers not only at the provincial and local but also at the national level, ignore those gender policies. The results are gender blind climate policies and response measures that among others increase the domestic burden of women, strengthen the women's gender role, and fail to meet the rights of women to information, involvement in the decision-making, and adequate living. Moreover, cities develop under the strong influence of globalization that refers to modernity as high-rise and concrete buildings and housing, malls, hotels, big cars. Many times those businesses occupied public lands or forced displaced the communities. The police, military, and local bureaucrats not seldom work together to get rid of the communities from the lands that they targeted.

Gender assessments on national and urban climate policies and actions

Poor and marginalized women in cities bear the brunt of climate disasters like floods, droughts, typhoons, and climate response measures, particularly evictions. Those women's experiences are described in gender assessments on climate policies and actions at the national level and four Indonesian cities, i.e., Jakarta (the capital city of Indonesia), Makassar (the capital city of South Sulawesi province), Yogyakarta (the capital city of Yogyakarta special region), and Jember (the capital of Jember regency). Jakarta and Makassar are coastal cities, while Yogyakarta and Jember are inland cities.

The gender assessments are part of research-based advocacy of the Gender into Urban Climate Change Initiative (GUCCI), an international collaborative program of women's organizations from 5 countries⁷. They are Aksi! for gender, social and ecological justice and Solidaritas Perempuan, both from Indonesia; All India Women's Conference, India; Equidad de Género, Mexico; Gender CC South Africa; Gender CC - Women for Climate Justice, Germany. GUCCI, launched in 2015, is supported by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Natural Conservation, Buildings, and Nuclear Safety.

⁶ GUCCI Jakarta research team, the Needs for Gender Responsive Green Open Space, An Executive Summary of a Gender Assessment on Jakarta City Climate Policy and Action, published by Aksi! for gender, social and ecological justice, April 2021

⁷ More information about the Gender into Urban Climate Change Initiative (GUCCI) project is at: <https://www.solidaritasperempuan.org/gender-into-urban-climate-change-initiative/>, and <https://www.gendercc.net/our-work/current-projects/gender-into-urban-climate-change-initiative.html>

GUCCI applied Gender Assessment and Monitoring of Mitigation and Adaptation (GAMMA)⁸ to assess national climate policies and actions. It is a method to study the extent of inclusion of gender perspectives into climate change mitigation and adaptation policies and actions at the city level through interviews with government officials, literature study, and analysis using indicators and scorecards. The assessments started with a baseline study and three stages of GAMMA, then were followed with policy recommendations and strategy papers.

Indonesian national climate policies

A description of the findings of GAMMA regarding Indonesian national and urban climate policies would give an example of the complexity of climate policies, gender mainstreaming, and women's resilience under the paradigm of patriarchy, globalization, and militarism. The urban policies correspond with national policies. Hence, if we talk about urban climate policies, we need also to look at the national climate policies.

GUCCI Indonesia research team assessed three Indonesian national climate policies determining the direction of climate response measures. They are (1) the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), (2) the National Action Plan to Reduce Greenhouse Gases Emissions, and (3) the National Action Plan for Climate Adaptation. The assessment found out the core problem regarding women and climate change in those policies, which is the insufficient attention to women in climate change, whether related to climate disasters or impacts of the climate response measures. This insufficient attention caused among others a lack of analysis on risks and vulnerabilities of women and other marginalized groups due to climate change or climate response measures⁹.

The understanding of gender and climate change in both the ministries and local governments is still weak. They consider women only as a part of the vulnerable group and a target for climate adaptation action. Meanwhile, climate mitigation policies and actions have not yet integrated gender considerations nor mainstream gender, although there are national policies that require to do so, like the Presidential Instruction no. 9 of the year 2000 on gender mainstreaming. Hence, the national government faces challenges to ensure meaningful participation of women and vulnerable groups in climate decision making, policy formulation, and action, as well as the monitoring and evaluation. For the last two years, the Indonesian Ministry for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection has prepared a Gender Action Plan (GAP) to guide gender mainstreaming in climate policy and action, but it is not completed yet. The lack of GAP and gender indicators makes the mitigation and adaptation policies and strategies are not responsive to the existing gender gaps in the context of women, gender and climate change, and efforts to address them.

The national government does not provide a sufficient budget for gender studies on impacts of existing climate policies and response, or for engaging gender experts, nor efforts to reduce gender vulnerability and inequality due to climate change and climate response measures. This was the reason that gender experts, women's organizations, and other vulnerable groups from various areas of life such as agriculture, coastal and urban areas, who could provide input based

⁸ More on GAMMA - Gender Assessment Method for Mitigation and Adaptation, please look at: Gotelind Alber, GenderCC-Women for Climate Justice, at:

https://unfccc.int/files/gender_and_climate_change/application/pdf/gendercc-gamma-tool.pdf

⁹ More in GUCCI national research team, Indonesian Gender Responsive Climate Policy, an Executive Summary of a Gender Assessment on Climate Policies at National Level, published by Aksi! for gender, social and ecological justice, July 2021.

on their capacities and experiences, were not involved in the drafting process of climate change policies. Moreover, it made the government not regularly examine the impacts of gender mainstreaming, social co-benefits, and losses arising from climate programs and actions at national and urban levels. Therefore, the national government also has not established a gender-sensitive and responsive complaint mechanism to handle the negative impacts derived from climate adaptation and mitigation policies and actions yet. A gender-sensitive and responsive complaint mechanism would help the community, especially women, raise their problems due to climate policies and actions that violate human and women's rights, or trigger violence and sexual harassment.

The national government does not yet develop gender-disaggregated data on access to energy, transportation, and sanitation. Gender-disaggregated data is key for planning, implementation, and evaluation of climate actions, and for addressing gender gaps in climate policies and actions at national and urban levels.

Moreover, the government information about gender and climate change, adaptation, and mitigation actions are still limited. There is also a lack of information media designed for illiterate and marginalized groups.

Climate policies in four Indonesian cities:

The implementation of those three national climate policies into regional and urban climate plans is varied. The national action plans are implemented mainly at the provincial and regency, seldom at the city level. The environmental program of the Regional Mid-Term Development Planning derived from the National Mid-Term Development Planning, shaped mostly the climate programs of the cities.

The gender assessments in the four cities found out following commonalities of core problems:

Although the climate is a part of environmental problems, there is a lack of a clear-cut understanding between environmental and climate issues. Many climate-relevant programs are developed under the environmental program, or the environmental program claims to run a climate program. Hence, the climate programs do not have the nomenclature nor budget to run separately. This situation triggers a lack of cities' specific policy on climate change, as well as institutions to address climate change.

Moreover, the city officials do not have a clear-cut understanding of the link between women, gender, and climate change yet. The cities do not have gender-responsive/transformational climate policies nor gender mainstream cities' climate mitigation and adaptation activities. The cities' decision-makers seemed to ignore Presidential Instruction no. 9 of the year 2000 on gender mainstreaming.

On the other hand, there is a lack of awareness among the urban communities, including women, about the crucial role of women in climate actions and for the city's resilience. Patriarchy norms that put women in the domestic sphere, but not in public, little information and awareness-raising activities for women about climate change, and its response measures are some of the reasons for this situation. A similar situation is also for the vulnerable groups. Their poor and marginalized status made them not informed about climate change. Therefore, there is a lack of meaningful involvement of women and other vulnerable groups in climate policy planning, implementation, evaluation.

Building women's resilience through urban climate policies:

Those national and urban climate policies left women behind in cities' efforts to respond to climate change and to strengthen the women's and cities' resilience towards climate change. Improving cities' climate policies to build women's resilience need to improve following national as well as urban policies and strengthen the institutional capacity to apply the policies.

Regarding national policies:

The policy improvements and changes have to ensure the application of gender mainstreaming and other national gender policies like the Presidential Instruction no. 9/2000, the policy paper of the Ministry of National Planning Board on gender into the adaptation of climate change and being prepared Gender Action Plan (GAP) and gender indicators to shape gender-transformative mitigation and adaptation policies and actions, to address gender gaps while reducing greenhouse gases emissions, and increase the country and communities' resilience against climate change.

Indonesia adopted the gender mainstreaming of a definition as in 1997 agreed to conclusions of ECOSOC¹⁰, through the Presidential Instruction no. 9/2000. The Ministry for National Development Planning in November 2012 released a policy paper on gender mainstreaming into the adaptation of climate change¹¹. The policy paper contains guidelines for decision-makers to integrate gender issues into climate adaptation-related policies, programs, and activities. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection will hopefully finalize soon its prepared Gender Action Plan (GAP) and gender indicators to guide gender mainstreaming in climate policies and actions. The national government has to put more efforts to pursue gender mainstreaming in the national and regional mid-term development planning to develop gender-transformative national and regional climate policies.

The National Determined Contribution (NDC) has to shape its priority strategies and climate mitigation actions to become more gender-transformative. This can be achieved by ensuring the involvement of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, gender experts, women's organizations, environmental organizations, community-based organizations, and other vulnerable groups in the entire process of discussions from building the strategic steps for implementation up to the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation levels. They can contribute to increasing capacity on gender and climate change and in gender studies on the risks and vulnerabilities of women and other marginalized groups to the impacts of climate change, and also on the security of women against sexual harassment, women's access to and control over resources, and structural inequality resulting from climate change and climate response measures.

¹⁰ UN Women, Gender mainstreaming extract from report of the Economic and Social Council for 1997, at: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/GMS.PDF>

¹¹ Kementerian PPN/BAPPENAS, press release on 28 November 2021, Peluncuran Dokumen Kebijakan Responsif Gender: Kertas Kebijakan: Pengarusutamaan Gender dalam Adaptasi Perubahan Iklim (PUG-API), at: https://www.bappenas.go.id/files/5913/5182/6592/siaran-pers---gmcca-ikkg-27nov_20130322141111_0.pdf

Moreover, the national government has to educate the public through various means, particularly poor communities and women, and other vulnerable and marginalized groups, about climate change, climate crises, and climate response measures, as well as about women and gender in climate issues.

Regarding institutional capacity:

The Directorate General of Climate Change Control under the Ministry of Environment and Forestry should develop a mechanism of gender assessments for climate response measures implemented at the national and local levels. The mechanism should include a gender-responsive grievance mechanism for communities that face the adverse impacts of climate response measures. The grievance mechanism will ensure the protection of the rights of women and other vulnerable groups regarding their security and equal treatment. Moreover, the mechanism guarantees their freedom from violence that might be triggered by climate response measures.

The national institutions related to climate change and its response measures like the Directorate General of Climate Change Control, the Ministry of National Development Plan, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, among others, should ensure gender-responsive budgeting with allocations for gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, capacity building, gender experts, and gender action plans for climate change at national, provincial, and urban levels. They should conduct a regular examination to assess the impact of gender considerations, social co-benefits, and costs of climate change adaptation and mitigation policies and programs/actions at national, provincial, and urban levels. A development of gender-disaggregated data guidelines should also be on their agenda.

At the urban level measures to build women's resilience should cover as follows:

The national institutions related to climate change have to capacitate the cities' officials on women, gender, and climate change, through various means and strengthen awareness about the importance of women in the resilience efforts. Once capacitated, the cities working units that run the cities' programs would then develop gender-responsive climate policies and climate strategic programs and actions; and ensure the implementation of the national gender mainstreaming policy into urban climate policies and actions. They would also shape mitigation and adaptation projects that respect human and women's rights, integrate gender, without triggering any eviction, develop activities to meet emission reduction targets, and at the same time strengthen urban resilience to climate change.

The city governments should establish a special unit for gender-responsive climate change actions that develop specific steps to encourage full participation of women and other vulnerable groups in policy planning, implementation, and evaluation of climate change actions. The special unit also has a task to conduct gender studies on climate change actions.

There is a system in Indonesia that allows the stakeholders to discuss development planning at the village level up to the city, province, and national levels. The system is called the *Musyawarah Rencana Pembangunan/Musrenbang* (Consultation on the Development Plan), ruled by Law no. 25 of the year 2004 on the National Development System. *Musrenbang* is a forum of the stakeholders in preparing regional and national development plans. The stakeholders come from

all state administration apparatus (executive, legislative, and judicial), community members, clergy, business owners, professional groups, non-governmental organizations, and others¹².

A nationwide organization of wives of the government officials¹³, called *Pemberdayaan dan Kesejahteraan Keluarga/PKK* (Family Empowerment and Welfare), in the practice represents community women. It is because the government authority at the village level that determines the participants of *Musrenbang* perceives *PKK* would represent the community women. However, *PKK* members are considered as the elite of the village societies. Thus, the village women do not feel to be represented by them. Besides *PKK* members, the authority will only invite the head of the household. Only men (fathers, husbands, or other male family members) are considered the head of the family. Hence, women potentially affected by the eviction for the expansion of green open space are usually not invited for *musrenbang*, but the *PKK* or their male family members. In case of an expansion of green open space without forced displacement, the *PKK* women or male family members determine the design and use of facilities in green open space.

The city government should make use of this system to ensure the meaningful participation of the communities and women affected by climate change and climate response measures. Moreover, this system should be applied democratically by letting the community women select their representatives into the *musrenbang*.

Concluding remark

Building women's resilience through urban climate policies is not simply creating a resilience project but considering the complexity of city's lives with its urban problems and institutional capacities that determine the policies, programs, and actions, and challenges posed to the communities affected by climate change, in particular the women, and aspects that can shape the resilience.

Many times climate policies and actions at national and city levels left women behind, increased the burden of domestic work, and strengthened the gender-based roles of women. Some key issues that trigger this situation are the little or even lack of understanding among the policymakers about the link between women, gender, and climate change. This lack of understanding made the policies and the institutional settings to operationalize the policies ignore the national policies regarding gender mainstreaming and gender and climate change, and other means to involve women in the decision-making of climate policies, programs, and actions.

Some ideas to improve the situation are to capacitate decision-makers at national and city levels, are among others the application of gender mainstreaming, and the assurance that women are consulted meaningfully in the decision makings related to climate disasters, climate crisis, and climate response measures. For the latter, strengthening the meaningful involvement of women through the available system of *musrenbang* has to be pursued. Let's women throw ideas about how to make themselves resilient against climate change, encourage their creativity, let them design and implement their ideas, and make reflection from the process. Hence, the empowerment process would make the needed women's resilience a reality.

¹² Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia nomor 25 tahun 2004 tentang Sistem Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional, at: <https://www.dpr.go.id/dokjdi/document/uu/26.pdf>

¹³ *PKK* was formally acknowledged nationwide through the letter of the Minister of Intern number SUS 3/6/12 of the year 1972. See *Pemberdayaan dan Kesejahteraan Keluarga, PKK*, at: <https://tppkk-pusat.org/tentangkami/>

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