

## Designing a Safe and Friendly Environment for Women and Children in Rural Community

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### ABSTRACT

*The need to build a safe and friendly environment has developed in response to the increasing number of vulnerable issues faced by children and women. Nevertheless, strategies to build a safe and friendly environment in rural areas have rarely been discussed. This study was conducted in Sukowilangun village, a Sub-District of Kalipare, the Regency Malang, East Java Province. This research formulates a Safe and Friendly Environment design by employing a macro perspective and conducting participatory action research (PRA) to comprehend the life experiences of women and children in rural communities. Several members of society were involved in identifying social, cultural, and structural issues that have disempowered children and women by applying Focus Group Discussion (FGD), in-depth interviews, and observation. Consequently, this design consists of two aspects: building an institutional network and program recommendations. This study promotes an institutional network design that requires the employment of three principles or strategies: participation, integration between women and children development programs, and involvement of community organizations or various parties, including formal and informal groups, village government, as well as professionals and scholars that are formed by rural community members, as facilitators and volunteers in the development programs. All of these principles should be adopted to undertake program recommendations to meet the rights of children in health, education, legal advice, security, and peace.*

**Keywords:** a safe and friendly environment, children, women, rural areas

## INTRODUCTION

Studies on women and children have been conducted on various issues experienced by them, including marginalization, violence, human trafficking, sexual abuse, oppression, and exploitation (Meyer & Stark, 2022a). These studies examine either the causal factors or the impacts on women and children in almost all aspects, including the psychological impact (Chadwick-Charuma et al., 2022) on health (Merrick et al., 2017) and education (Mitchell et al., 2021). Studies show that over half of all children – 1 billion children, aged 2 – 17 years—experience such violence (Hillis et al., 2016). For instance, in Indonesia, a report from Lembaga Perlindungan Saksi dan Korban (LPSK) or the Witness and Victim Protection Agency demonstrates that the number of cases of sexual violence against children has increased. In 2016, there were 25 cases, increasing in 2017 to 81 cases and peaking at approximately 206 cases in 2018 (Ilyasa, 2021). Moreover, women have also faced the same issues in terms of their vulnerability in politics (Detraz & Peksen, 2017), economics (Topal, 2019a), workplaces (Hwang, 2019), public transport (Prati, 2017), public space (Khalili & Fallah, 2018), religion (Peters et al., 2022a), and household (Sinharoy et al., 2019).

To address the above issues, the United Nations (UN), scholars, NGOs, and governments have attempted to find appropriate models, approaches, and strategies to build a safe and friendly space or environment for women (Koehler, 2016) and children (Islam, 2019), as well as establish community development programs to empower them (Buisson et al., 2022). For instance, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has urged countries around the world to build child-friendly cities; Indonesia established its Child-Friendly City (CFC) or Kota Layak Anak (KLA) (Yamin, 2016). Recently, this program has been developed to overcome the sexual exploitation of children via online or social media, known as Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA). In terms of women-related issues, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include gender equality as part of its agenda. This has been adopted by the Indonesian Government as a development strategy known as gender mainstreaming, pengarusutamaan gender (PUG), or gender-based development.

Many studies have examined various strategies for designing safe and friendly environments for women and children. Concerning children, studies have focused on several spaces, including schools (Godfrey et al., 2012a), healthcare services (Lenton & Ehrich, 2015a), and poor neighborhoods (Putri et al., 2016). Other particular circumstances also become a concern of those studies, such as children who stay in refugee camps (Meyer & Stark, 2022b) and camps for disaster survivors (Mordeno et al., 2018). Moreover, the literature on women focuses on building safe and friendly environments for women in several areas, including public transport (Prati, 2017), hospitals (Das et al., 2019), and maternal facilities (Blake et al., 2016).

All of the above studies have examined women- and children-related issues separately, while there is a lack of research exploring both women- and children-related issues in one study. Some studies have attempted to examine both women and children, but within different scopes, such as family (Bodner et al., 2018) and mother-children issues (Chang, 2018). Several studies have shown that various issues that have been challenged by women have direct and indirect effects on their children. These issues include domestic violence (Lysova et al., 2023; Peters et al., 2022b), migrant workers (children left behind) (Malamassam, 2014), (Malamassam, 2014) sexual worker moms (Karamouzian et al., 2016), and custody of the children of women (Stone et al., 2017). Therefore, (Larner, 2022) and (Innes & Rayment-McHugh, 2023) highlighted the importance of strategies for preventing children's issues by focusing on the role of parents. Moreover, (Andal, 2022) and (Zyl et al., 2022) emphasized the importance of child-friendly spaces in urban planning, advocating for the unique needs of children in coastal cities and urban areas. These contributions underscore the necessity of integrating the efforts of women and children to foster a safe and friendly environment.

Additionally, most research studies have focused on building a safe and friendly environment, not on urban areas and cities/districts, whereas rural areas are rarely discussed (Azhom, 2021). However, due to the promulgation of Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning villages, researchers should consider paying attention to rural areas as well as rural communities. According to this regulation, villages have now become the forefront of the development process in Indonesia. This policy also puts the village as a subject with greater authority to manage its own budget to conduct development programs. 'Previously, the village only had a source of income from the allocation of the Village Budget (APBDes) which was disbursed from the District Budget and Village-Owned Revenue (PADes)' (Hasriadi & Malino, 2020). Hasriadi & Malino (2020) also explain that the central government

distributes village funds ranging from Rp. 600 million to Rp. 1 billion to village governments in Indonesia. Therefore, villages in Indonesia should become a front guard for the protection and fulfillment of children's rights (Hasriadi & Malino, 2020; Ribhu, 2008), as well as for women of course.

Recently, the Indonesian government has included both children's and women's issues in establishing good governance and planned, comprehensive, and sustainable community development in rural areas, known as *Desa Ramah Perempuan dan Peduli Anak (DERAP-PA)* or *Friendly and Care/Safe Village for Women and Children* (Effendi et al., 2021). The main objective of this program or policy is to provide a safe place, to prevent women and children from gender-based violence, and to build a creative space for children, women, and other vulnerable groups, including elderly people and people with disabilities. This objective is also aimed at providing protection from disasters, human trafficking, and survivors of violence.

This article aims to show the initial steps of designing and developing DERAP-PA in Sukowilangun Village. To develop this design, this study will capture the issues faced by children and women in Sukowilangun Village and identify both formal and informal institutions that have been established by rural communities to address these issues. The researcher conducted prior research in the village. Many women from Sukowilangun village go abroad as migrant workers in several countries such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia (Chawa et al., 2020). This has sparked several issues affecting the development of children, resulting in juvenile delinquency and domestic violence (Chawa et al., 2018);(Chawa et al., 2020). On the other hand, a female group called *Perempuan Singkong Jaya* has conducted various community development programs and advocacy to address these issues. Based on previous research findings, it can be assumed that Desa Sukowilangun is a potential source of DERAP-PA. This study begins by describing several issues related to women and children from the perspectives of local governments and community members. This study also identifies both formal and informal institutions that have been established by rural communities to address children's and women's issues. Once these two activities are conducted, the structural changes required to design a safe and friendly environment can be established. Structural changes can be achieved by employing a macro perspective and concept related to a safe and friendly environment for women and children. There are also two other perspectives or approaches that can be employed in community development practice, including meso and micro (Campfens, 1997; Kenny, 2006), which focus on the structure and study of large-scale phenomena, such as social class, societal systems, culture, and norms, while the micro approach emphasizes individual and small-group behavior and social interactions between individuals. The Meso perspective, however, deals with social phenomena at a meso scale, including the community.

### **Defining a Safe and Friendly Environment for Children and Women**

The environment has been defined in various ways, depending on the authors' perspective, or economic, physical, social-cultural, ecological, political, ethical, and physiological perspectives (Godfrey et al., 2012b). However, all these authors focused on the same objective--to build a good or better environment for the subject of their studies, particularly for elderly people, people with disabilities, children, girls, women, mothers and their babies, and families (Lugosi et al., 2020). In particular, child-friendly environments have an abundance of definitions that employ a variety of themes and sites, including child-friendly spaces (Islam, 2019), child-friendly school initiatives (Godfrey et al., 2012b), *Children-Friendly-City* (Ayuningtyas & Riyantini, 2017), available specific spaces for children, such as green spaces (Jansson et al., 2016), playgrounds (Dewi, 2012), skateboard lots (Li & Li, 2017), poor neighborhoods (Ghanbari-Azarneir et al., 2015), independent mobility possibilities (Kyttä, 2004), inclusiveness (Hashim & Yussof, 2017), social justice (Riddell & Weedon, 2017), health care (Lenton & Ehrich, 2015b), and involvement of children participation as well as their perspectives on planning and decision-making processes (Movshovich, 2015).

A child-friendly environment was initiated by UNICEF, known as the *Child-Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI)* (UNICEF, 2023). This initiative urges the cities or communities to design a safe and friendly environment for children based on indicators such as having access to essential services; experiencing quality, inclusive, and participatory education; and skills development; expressing their opinions and influencing decisions that affect them; participating in family, cultural, city/community, and social life; living in a clean, unpolluted, and safe environment with access to green spaces; meeting friends and having places to play and enjoy themselves; and having a fair chance in life regardless of their ethnic

origin. Additionally, UNICEF states that cities and communities should become places where children are safe and protected from exploitation, violence, and abuse. This study adopted this statement to define the concept of a safe environment for children and women. UNICEF explains that a woman-friendly environment must provide a formal or informal place where women feel physically and emotionally safe, comfortable, and able to express themselves (UNICEF, 2020). Several studies have extended this issue to various themes, including the participation and empowerment of women in various aspects, such as politics (Detraz & Peksen, 2017), economics (Topal, 2019b), a friendly environment for women in various areas or spaces, such as organizations (Deniz et al., 2012), workplaces and urban areas (Hwang, 2019), and infrastructure (Schmitt et al., 2018).

Cities worldwide are still working to provide a safe and friendly environment for children and women. For instance, in Hyderabad, India, a research study shows how a group-lending microcredit program has increased the capacity of women to invest in small businesses, gain profits from preexisting businesses, and increase women's access to microcredit (Banerjee et al., 2015). Other impact stories also show cities of some countries that succeed in running activities to provide woman-friendly environments, such as providing police units for female victims of violence in Morocco (UN Women, 2021b); involving Roma women in local decision-making processes pertaining to community security, recovery, local development, service delivery, reconciliation, and peacebuilding (UN Women, 2021d); raising awareness of domestic violence in Haiti (UN Women, 2021c); and employing faith-based approaches by Christian communities in Fiji to prevent violence against women (UN Women, 2021a).

Related to child-friendly environments, many countries have established various development programs to achieve this objective. For instance, some countries built infrastructure for children, such as sidewalk access to prevent childhood obesity in China (Wei et al., 2021), green spaces for beneficial impacts on children's cognition in six European Countries (Fernandes et al., 2023), and beneficial impacts on children's cognition (Bijnens et al., 2020). Other cities are recognized by UNICEF as child-friendly cities, including Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the United States, by including the voices of young people in decision-making on city boards, commissions, and committees, and distributing free books to children and their parents via hospitals and health clinics (UNICEF., 2024). Another example shows that more than 300 cities in Spain are recognized as child-friendly cities by establishing various programs, including educational support programs (school reinforcement, dropout, absenteeism prevention, etc.), sports programs adapted for disabled children, providing 1,000 km of segregated bicycle lanes, making them safer for use by children, and programs to develop emotional, educational, and parental skills in families (UNICEF, 2023).

To design a safe and friendly environment for children and women, this study adopts several indicators established by the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection, No. 12 of 2011 concerning The Indicators of Regency/City Children Friendly (KEMENPPPA, 2011). By employing these indicators, there are 374 municipalities, regencies, and provinces in Indonesia that received rewards as child-friendly cities in 2023, based on the Decree of the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection No. 160 Tahun 2023 about the Regency/Municipal/Province that receive awards as child-friendly cities. At the village level, this regulation has been adopted in a particular program, *Desa Ramah Perempuan dan Peduli Anak* (DERAP-PA), meaning Child- and Women-Friendly Villages. The indicators are as follows:

1. Availability of gender disaggregated data in the village profile.
2. The availability of regulations and other legal products to protect women and children.
3. The availability of development programs based on gender responsiveness and the budget for implementation.
4. Participation of women and children in making decisions related to village development
5. The accumulation of development programs that are friendly to women and children in Musrenbang (Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan) or deliberation mechanisms in the development planning process.
6. The implementation of women empowerment to develop independent women groups (minimum three-woman groups, the forum of children, disabilities, and elderly people).
7. Availability of friendly infrastructure for children, women, and other groups.

## METHODS

Macro and micro perspectives can be adopted as strategies or approaches to undertake community development programmes. The micro perspective will analyze 'attitudes and actions of small decision units, such as individuals, households, or firms' (Carlsson, 1968). Related to community development programs, the micro perspective focuses more on the individual level as the main focus and objective of development programs. This level becomes the agent/subject, and the object of development (Bhattacharyya, 2004) states that the ultimate goal of development is human autonomy or agency. In contrast to the micro perspective, the macro perspective focuses more on the structural level as a central problem of community development. The macro perspective task is 'to investigate phenomena that cannot be distributed among individuals or which appear as average or aggregate values for groups or populations (Carlsson, 1968). This level consists of the state, institutions, and privileged individuals or groups. Additionally, the macro perspective focuses on individual or agency issues only in terms of their relationship to large-scale structures. Community development practitioners employ a macro perspective concerning large-scale social phenomena and consider structural change to be the main solution to these problems in the implementation of development programs.

This study adopts a macro perspective to empower children and women in Sukawilangun. This study assumes that the central problems faced by children are caused by external factors or external individuals (children). In sociology, external factors are linked to the concept of social structure. Social structure is the motive and intention of an actor or an individual (Smelser, 1998). Social structure is an external means of determining individuals' actions. Sociology defines the concept of social structure in several ways (Hernes, 1976; Kusmanto & Elizabeth, 2018). The social structure consists of patterned social relationships that are performed regularly and continually. Moreover, functionalism explains that social structures consist of functional relations between social institutions. Thus, social structure includes social and functional relations between social institutions that have been patterned and performed regularly and continually in society. By employing a macro perspective, it can be assumed that a social structure causes various issues faced by women and children, such as gender equality issues that cause domestic violence. Thus, structural changes related to gender equality are required in order to provide a safe and friendly environment. This study assumes that a safe and friendly environment would enable children and women to live independently, control and make decisions for their future, and develop their capacity in a safe and friendly environment without being dependent on others. This assumption is in line with UNICEF's initiative related to child-friendly cities. It states that cities and communities should serve as places where children can live a safe life and achieve well-being (UNICEF, 2018).

In this study, a Participatory Action Research (PAR) method was employed. As an extension of the critical paradigm, PAR emerged as a critique of the traditional methodology that always took a dominant position on research subjects and could not drive praxis into social life. Hence, instead of being neutral, in the critical paradigm's view, the researcher should take an ideological position to challenge existing power structures and give more voice to vulnerable people. The research must promote inclusivity and participation and address issues of social injustice. Through the critical paradigm, PAR suggests that research should be based on social experience, because the theory has been inducted from practice, from what is found to work, and not deducted from propositions (Chambers, 1994). As a result, unlike the conventional approach, which has been conducted by researchers dominantly, PAR involves the community under study to participate actively throughout the research process from the initial design to the final presentation of results and discussion of action implications (Chambers, 1994; Whyte, 1997). Whyte states that the objective of PAR is 'to empower low-status people in the organization or community to make decisions and take actions that were previously foreclosed to them' (Whyte, 1997).

PAR involves the participation of rural community members in designing a safe and friendly environment for children and women. In the initial study, these members were involved in identifying social, cultural, and structural issues that have disempowered children and women. Their participation continued to formulate the design of that environment. Twenty informants were selected based on their knowledge, tasks, responsibilities, and involvement in relation to children and women's issues. They consist of several community groups including five informants from local or village governments, other informants from woman groups, deriving from four informants from Kelompok Perempuan Singkong Jaya and three from Koperasi Wanita (Cooperative for Women), one from Pendidikan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (PKK), meaning Family Welfare Movement or program at village level to educate women on various aspects of family welfare, two informants from Pos Layanan Terpadu (Posyandu) or Integrated Health Center which serves children and elder people; some other informants were from Children

Forum, consisting of a teacher and two children; a local artist from Setia Budhaya, an art studio teaching traditional dance for children, and one informant from Karang Taruna (youth organization) was also involved.

This study was conducted in Sukowilangun village, a Sub-District of Kalipare, the Regency Malang, East Java Province. This province, particularly in the Malang Regency, has the highest number of cases of violence toward women and children. Moreover, East Java Province has contributed the highest number of migrant workers in Indonesia (Paulus, 2022). These workers mostly come from several kabupaten (regencies), including Malang (particularly from the Kecamatan/sub-district Sumbermanjing Wetan and Kalipare), Blitar, Ponorogo, Banyuwangi, and Tulungagung (Mhattir, 2022; Nana, 2017). As a consequence, East Java Province and Malang Regency are challenged by various issues related to women and children, such as violence and leaving children.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, review of documents, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). In-depth interviews were conducted to gather information from the head and the members of women's groups related to the various problems that children and women face in Sukowilangun village, as well as strategies conducted to overcome these issues. This method was also used to obtain the same information from local governments. Observations were employed to capture data related to infrastructure, space, and activities provided, done, and accessed by children and women. To find the basis of the problems, as well as to formulate a design aimed at creating a safe and friendly environment for children and women, this study invited all groups of informants to meet in the FGD to check the validity of the data collected from interviews and observations. Supporting documents, including gender-disaggregated data from the local government (village government) and empowerment programs for children, were examined.

The collected data were analyzed using several types of analyses. First, it involved a policy analysis focused on development policies and strategies contained in the development documents of Sukowilangun. Second, indicator fulfillment analysis was used to support the elements of gender equality, in general, to ensure that an environment or region has fulfilled the elements of a gender-responsive area based on government indicators. Third, a root cause analysis was used to investigate the existing conditions, potency, and problems of gender and children in Sukowilangun. Fourth, SWOT quadrant analysis is a scoring system analysis that involves matrix evaluation of the Internal Factor Analysis Summary (IFAS), which consists of strength (S) and weakness (W), and External Factor Analysis Summary (EFAS), which consists of opportunity (O) and threat (T) (Yoeti, 1996).

## **RESULTS**

### **Women and Children Issues in Sukowilangun Village**

This study found some crucial issues faced by women and children in Sukowilangun village. Related to women issues, as explained before, Sukowilangun village, the sub-district of Kalipare was among others sending the highest number of woman migrant workers abroad from Malang Regency, East Java Province. These migrant workers share the same characteristics as female migrant workers from other parts of Indonesia and other developing countries; they are unskilled and poorly educated due to poverty issues in their families (Raharto et al., 2002; Raharto & Noveria, 2012), and they are married to some children (Raharto et al., 2002). They have an expectation of increasing family income to address poverty issues. They have to go abroad unaccompanied and leave their families, including their children, in the village. Several studies have found that these migrant workers could achieve economic well-being, as well as raise the social status of migrant families, as indicated by the conditions in which they can afford new or renovated houses, furniture, and vehicles (Malamassam, 2014). This economic improvement is also caused by a change in lifestyle, which is primarily influenced by the increasing income they earn as migrant workers. Many ex-migrant workers have become more consumptive only for prestige reasons such as buying luxurious cars, instead of fulfilling their basic needs (Chawa et al., 2020). However, economic improvements and changes in the lifestyles of migrant workers have caused several consequences, especially when they return to the village as ex-migrant workers. They will have less income to fulfill this new lifestyle. This situation has caused stress and other psychological problems in female ex-migrant workers and their families. In many cases, this triggers domestic violence and returns them to poverty.

This study also found that the absence of a mother working as a migrant worker and serving as a breadwinner caused changes in the family structure and the roles of its members. For instance, fathers or extended families, such as grandparents or aunts, must take care of the children left behind, replacing the role of mothers who become migrant workers.

This has given rise to a vulnerable situation for the children, leading to a lack of affection, a change in the pattern of parenting, and a lack of facilities to develop physically and psychologically, the following interviewee expresses this condition:

*I feel so sad for them... Every time I go to their house, they run to me... Hug me full of affection. I think they miss their mother a lot* (Pujiati, local or village government employee)

A prior study found that the change in parenting patterns in the families of migrant workers in Sukowilangun also caused another issue (Chawa et al., 2018). Husbands, grandparents, aunts, and other families could not deliver much control to children and teenagers in using social media. This has resulted in negative impacts, including drug abuse and bad drinking behavior, as well as porn addiction. Other research studies have found the same issues as in Sukowilangun, explaining that in patriarchal culture, the change in public and domestic roles between men and women could be problematic and stressful, and this change may trigger family problems (Suryadi et al., 2022; Wulan et al., 2018)

Moreover, this study found that an unfriendly environment is another problem faced by other children, including those with special needs and those born outside marriage, while their mothers worked as international migrant workers. Regarding those with special needs, parents lack the knowledge of how to look after their children, particularly regarding their needs and problems. Some of these parents are reluctant to ask other people or institutions for support to fulfill the needs of these children. Furthermore, there are no programs in the village to support families with children with special needs. This issue is also experienced by children born outside marriage. Moreover, these children have difficulties getting birth certificates, as their mothers are reluctant or too afraid (shy) to face the administrative process. Having illegitimate children while becoming migrant workers because of rape cases or cohabitation is deemed a disgrace for some ex-migrant workers. As a result, these children do not have enough support to fulfill their needs and the right to obtain legal status from the government.

Furthermore, this study also found that the poverty issue has given rise to an unsafe and unfriendly environment for children in Sukowilangun village, including early marriage issues. Poor families assume that early marriage has become the way in which they can address poverty problems. They urge their children and teenagers, particularly girls, to marry earlier. Early marriage is expected to exclude them from being an economic burden or dependent on their poor families, since their husbands are expected to take over the problems.

This study found that a situation in which women or household mothers live in an unsafe and unfriendly environment will also impact their children. Therefore, designing a safe and friendly environmental program should include or integrate both women and children simultaneously. The concept of the environment should take into account external factors, governments, and surrounding communities required to achieve a good environment for these two groups.

### **The Indicators of the Safe and Friendly Environment for Women and Children in Sukowilangun Village**

This study has discovered that several indicators to build a safe and friendly environment are already provided in Sukowilangun village; these indicators will be elaborated upon in the following sections.

#### ***The identification of age and gender-disaggregated data in the village profile***

This study identifies that the local government in Sukowilangun village provides disaggregated data on women, as well as children. Table 1 (page 109) shows the gender-disaggregated data provided in Sukowilangun Village.

The village government has already disaggregated social and demographic data based on gender, as illustrated in Table.1. However, it has not yet included some data, including the number of men and women who join political parties, members of cooperatives, job seekers, family welfare, and business credit recipients. Sex- or gender-disaggregated data are required for an effective response in relation to establishing policy or development programs, identifying the different needs of men and women, as well

**Table 1.** Gender-Disaggregated Data in Sukowilangun Village, East Java

No	Indicator	Data Availability		Year
		Yes	No	
1	The number of men and women who join political parties		✓	
2	The number of men and women who committed a crime	✓		2021
3	The number of informal workers	✓		2021
4	The number of migrant workers	✓		2021
5	The number of domestic workers	✓		2021
6	The number of job seekers		✓	
7	The number of cooperative members (Cooperation)		✓	
8	The number of Business Credit Recipient		✓	
9	The number of micro small and medium-scale enterprises	✓		2021
10	Land ownership data	✓		2021
11	The number of laborers in the agricultural sector	✓		2021
12	The number of fishermen	✓		2021
13	The number of teachers	✓		2021
14	The number of participations in education at all levels ranging from primary, secondary, to high school	✓		2021
15	The number of family planning participants	✓		2021
16	The mortality rate among mothers	✓		2021
17	The number of cases of violence against women	✓		2021
18	The number of families who live in poverty ( <i>pra-sejahtera</i> )	✓		2021
19	Prosperous Family Data at all levels (level 1,2,3)		✓	
20	The number of woman representatives in village government	✓		2021

as the inequality between the two genders in particular aspects, such as health and education (Hawkes et al., 2022).

The local government has also established age-disaggregated data, particularly children's data. Table 2 shows data on children in relation to their needs and issues.

**Table 2.** Age or Child Disaggregated Data in Sukowilangun Village, East Java

No	Indicator	Data Availability		Year
		Yes	No	
1	Data of Children with Birth Certificates		✓	
2	The number of children forum	✓		2021
3	Infant Mortality Rate Data	✓		2020
4	Children Nutrition Status Data	✓		2021
5	Immunization Data	✓		2021
6	Data of households with clean water access	✓		2021
7	Data of children with special needs	✓		2021
8	The number of schools ranging from primary, secondary, to high schools	✓		2021
9	Data of violence against children	✓		2021
10	Data of children using drugs		✓	
11	Data of children as laborers		✓	
12	Data of children of migrant workers		✓	

The local government has identified various children-related issues and needs in Sukowilangun Village based on age- or child-disaggregated data. Included in these data are the number of institutions concerning children, babies and children mortality, households with clean water access, nutrition status of a toddler, immunization status, number of children with special needs, number of schools from elementary, secondary, and senior high schools, counseling institutions where parents could have information about the pattern of children's development, and the number of violence cases in children. However, the local government needs to include other unavailable data, including children involved in drugs and the number of children who do not have a birth certificate (Everson, 2008).

### ***Community development programs based on gender-responsive, as well as the budget for its implementation***

Community development programs for women, including the budget to undertake these programs, have been conducted by the local government in Sukowilangun Village. Some formal women's groups undertaking these programs include Program Kesejahteraan Keluarga (PKK) or Wealth Family Program, Pos Pelayanan Terpadu (Posyandu), or Integrated Health Center and Cooperative for Women (Koperasi Wanita). The Wealth Family Program focuses on some family development programs to increase the capacity of the family to fulfill basic needs, knowledge about Pancasila (The Indonesian State Ideology), and environmental preservation activities. The Health Service Integrated Center takes care of the health of both men and women. Therefore, it has a program to regularly control, check, and advise the health of elderly people. Women's Cooperation attempts to increase women's wealth by developing business programs for women through a revolving fund program.

Additionally, women's development programs have also been conducted by an informal group of women, namely Kelompok Perempuan Singkong (cassava) Jaya. Kelompok Perempuan Singkong Jaya has a main objective to increase the income and wealth of women (economic development programs for women) in Sukowilangun village. To achieve this objective, this group undertakes several small business activities that produce various products from cassava, such as cassava and mocaf flour, chips, cake, and snacks. Moreover, this group also helps its members to suffer from domestic violence by providing advocacy and counseling.

The local government has also established community development programs that focus on the education and health of children. These programs facilitate children with playgrounds, libraries for children and parents, counseling services for migrant children and parents who have children with disabilities, training for children related to traffic regulations and disciplines, and several programs to overcome stunting issues. This last program has focused on some activities, including socialization with the parents related to knowledge and the ways in which they could increase nutrition for their children as well as for expectant mothers. The village government succeeded in conducting all these programs. Therefore, Sukowilangun village was labeled as a village that succeeded in implementing the best practices of Desa Layak Anak (DEKELA) or a children-friendly village.

Unfortunately, most of these programs could not be sustained due to the covid-19 pandemic and inadequate availability of experts, such as psychologists, who are expected to provide counseling to women and children. Moreover, the local government also needs guidance from and coordination with the government at a higher level, such as that of sub-districts and districts, to develop all those programs by providing experts with support to the children.

### ***The implementation of women empowerment to develop independent women groups (minimum three-woman groups, the forum of children, disabilities, and elder people)***

The above explanation shows several community development programs that have been conducted to empower women and children in Sukowilangun Village. Most of these programs are led by formal organizations or institutions under the coordination of village government including PKK, Posyandu, DEKELA, children's forum, and Koperasi Wanita (Kopwan) means Women's Cooperation. Moreover, other groups undertake empowerment programs for women and children, particularly Kelompok Perempuan Singkong Jaya and an art group, namely Sanggar Setia Budhaya. Kelompok Perempuan Singkong Jaya is a women's organization consisting of ex-migrant woman workers and domestic violence victims. The main objectives of its programs are to increase income among women (economic empowerment) and foster gender equality to overcome psychological or traumatic issues faced by those victims, as well as to avoid and reduce domestic violence against women and children in Sukowilangun Village (Chawa et al., 2020). Bu Sri, the founder of Kelompok Perempuan Singkong Jaya is concerned about the complex problems of women in this village. Therefore, Bu Sri establish this women group to find the solution to these problems in 2013. The word 'Singkong' means cassava, used to illustrate various cassava products produced by the members as the main activity of this group, such as mocaf and tapioca flour, tiwul, and cassava chips as illustrated in the picture below:



**Figure 1.** Mocaf Flour Products of Kelompok Perempuan Singkong Jaya in Sukowilangun Village, East Java

In the children empowerment program, an art group, namely Lembaga Pelatihan (training institution) Setia Budhaya has conducted art training for children. This institution provides art training twice a week, including traditional music (gamelan) and dance for the children in Sukowilangun village, and this training is held in a studio. From the observation, it could be seen that the children were very enthusiastic to join the training. Other children were playing with their friends without using a gadget while watching the training or waiting for their turn.

***The availability of friendly infrastructure for children and women as well as for other groups***

This study has found another indicator of friendly infrastructure for children and women in Sukowilangun village. Most of this infrastructure is provided by the local government, including playgrounds, facilities at kindergartens, a library accessible to parents and their children in the village hall, and a football field where the children can play sports activities. Moreover, community members in Sukowilangun Village also provide other friendly infrastructure for women and children, such as a studio for traditional music and dance belonging to Lembaga Pelatihan Kesenian Setia Budhaya (illustrated in Figure 2) and a production house provided by Kelompok Perempuan Singkong Jaya, where its members produce various kinds of cassava products.



**Figure 2.** The Studio of Lembaga Pelatihan Kesenian Setia Budhaya in Sukowilangun Village, East Java

## **Designing a Safe and Friendly Environment for Women and Children**

This study has found that women and children in Sukowilangun village have faced complex problems creating an unfriendly and unsafe environment. These problems include poverty, female migrants and ex-migrant workers, domestic violence, changes in lifestyle, children left by migrant parents, domestic violence toward children, various family problems raising the probability of dropouts and delayed school progression, lack of good manners for children, inadequate attention to children, negligence, sexual harassment, and juvenile delinquency.

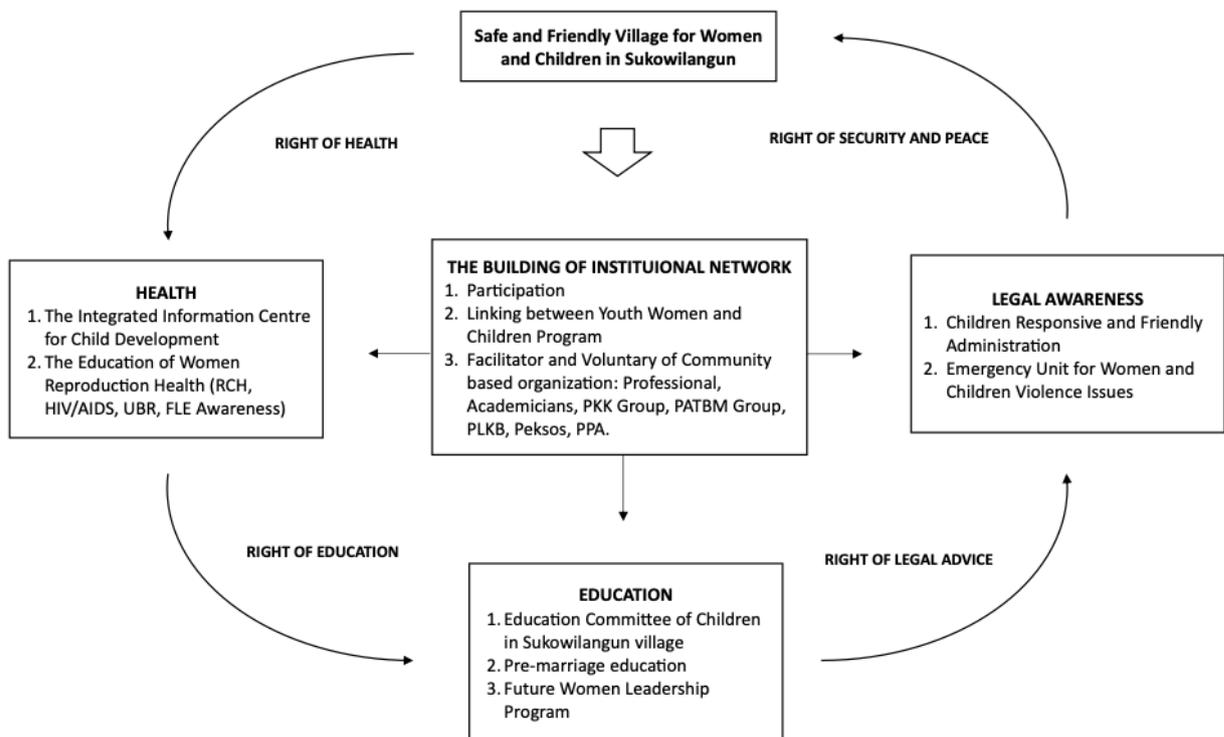
This study also found that there are government organizations and community groups that attempt to conduct programs or activities to address the complex problems of women and children. As explained before, related to children's issues, the local government has established a program called Desa Layak Anak (DEKELA), which refers to village-friendly children, posyandu, and children's forums. Meanwhile, the local government has also established development programs focused on women's issues conducted by the PKK and Women's cooperation (Kopwan). Local or village governments provide data and information based on gender disaggregated data. Besides the local government, this study found that there are also community groups or organizations which focus on women's and children's issues. Included in these groups are Kelompok Perempuan Singkong Jaya and an art studio namely Sanggar Setia Budhaya. These groups have conducted various activities to overcome the problems faced by women and children in Sukowilangun. Kelompok Perempuan Singkong Jaya is a women's organization consisting of ex-migrant woman workers and domestic violence victims. The main objectives of its programs are to increase income among women (economic empowerment) and foster gender equality to overcome psychological or traumatic issues faced by those victims, as well as to avoid and reduce domestic violence against women and children in Sukowilangun Village (Chawa et al., 2020).

However, this study found that there are some problems to provide a children-friendly village in Sukowilangun. First, there are fewer community organizations compared to the complex problems of women and children that need to be addressed. For the improvement, it would need more formal and informal community groups to be involved in overcoming these issues. Second, each government organization - PKK, Posyandu, Children's Forum, DEKELA, Kopwan and community group - Kelompok Perempuan Singkong Jaya and Setia Budhaya Art Studio - are only focusing on one issue, either women or children. However, this study found that it is difficult to disconnect women's issues from children's issues and vice versa. For example, the condition where women who suffer from domestic violence will have impact on their children psychologically. To solve these problems, all government organizations and community groups should have collaborations or engagement to provide a good environment for women as well as for their children. Third, this study found that there were fewer activities or programs that involved other parties to address women's and children's issues. such as community leaders, teachers, and religious leaders. These parties could potentially help the children left by their migrant parents by acknowledging the issues of parental migration in their lectures or sermons. This strategy is in line with the macro perspective in the implementation of community development programs that consider structural changes to empower communities, such as the existing support or policies of the government, social and cultural institutions, norms, and the environment. Fourth, cultural issues also hamper the achievement of a safe and friendly environment for children and women in Sukowilangun, particularly patriarchal culture. Other research studies have found that patriarchal culture has caused children and women to suffer from vulnerable issues, such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, and exploitation (Malamassam, 2014). The improvement that could be made is the government organizations and community groups required to deliver activities to increase community members' awareness, particularly related to gender relations at the family level.

Based on the research findings, this study aimed to depict a design to create a safe and friendly environment for women and children. This design consists of institutional network building and program recommendations.

### ***Institutional network building***

A good environment for women and children could be created by building a network that connects some institutions in Sukowilangun Village, as illustrated in Figure 3 (Page 113).



**Figure 3.** The Design of a Safe and Friendly Environment for Women and Children

This study illustrates that the mechanism to design a safe and friendly village for women and children should start with institutional network building, meaning that a network connects some institutions in Sukowilangun village such as education, government, and community institutions. To build this network, the design could adopt three principles or strategies, namely participation, integration between women and children development programs, and involve various parties or community organizations including village government, professionals, scholars, as well as formal dan informal groups which are formed by rural community members, such as PKK and Posyandu as facilitators and volunteers in the development programs (Islam, 2019; Malamassam, 2014; Tolulope et al., 2021)

The first principle, participation means that the implementation of various development programs to empower women and children should involve their active participation. Research studies show that the participation of women is required to undertake the development programs (Tolulope et al., 2021) However, these studies have also found that various structural and cultural factors or barriers hamper the participation of women and children in development programs. Including in these structural factors are the existing various social relations and social institutions that impede woman and children from obtaining their basic rights in law, economy, education, and health. For instance, many children in Sukowilangun have no birth certificate because of some reasons, one of those is their parents do not understand the importance of this legal document and how to access it. In particular, left-behind children have faced parenting issues from their fathers or other families since their mothers left Sukowilangun to become migrant workers. Moreover, many women in this village have had difficulties working since becoming ex-migrant workers. As a result, they face other issues, such as domestic violence and poverty. Structural change is required to transform the pattern of social relations between social institutions to provide a safe environment for women and their children. For instance, the change in relations between family members and also the change in relations between social institutions, for example, the ways by which the local government and community groups could work together to overcome women's and children's issues.

The second principle requires the integration of developmental programs for women and children. This principle is needed based on the fact that if women faced particular issues it would impact on their children. For instance, abandoned children or children left by their migrant parents have faced issues such as domestic violence and juvenile delinquency because of the change in family structure, as their mothers have left for other countries to work as migrant workers (Campfens, 1997). The third principle is the involvement of many parties and community members in becoming leaders, counselors,

facilitators, and volunteers to provide a support system for addressing women's and children's issues. These parties involve professionals such as psychologists, scholars from universities, youth, the local government, and female leaders, as well as all institutions dealing with women's and children's issues, such as PKK, posyandu, dasawisma, PPA, PATBM, and PLKB. The last two principles would require various parties to build networking in addressing women's and children's issues. This study found that government organizations, such as PKK and Kopwan, and children's forums and community groups, such as Kelompok Perempuan Singkong Jaya, run development programs separately. This strategy could impede these parties from comprehensively addressing women's and children's issues.

All these principles should be adopted to establish a good environment for both children and women. There are at least four fundamental rights for children and women that should be fulfilled to build this environment. These rights include rights to health, education, legal advice, legal security, and peace. Based on these rights, several program recommendations should be established and conducted by Sukowilangun Village and other villages to be safe and friendly villages for children and women (DERAP-PA).

### **Program Recommendations**

This study provides program recommendations by which a village can build a safe and friendly environment for women and children. These programs include three aspects based on the regulations of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection: health, education, and legal awareness. These aspects should be considered in the empowerment of women and children to fulfill their fundamental rights, including the right to health, education, legal advice, and security and peace (illustrated in Figure 3). In relation to health programs, this study found that it would be better for Sukowilangun Village to build Pusat Informasi Pelayanan Tumbuh Kembang Anak Terpadu or the Integrated Information Centre for Child Development. This institution provides services or information related to child development, particularly at an early age. Another program is education or training to enhance the knowledge of community members regarding female reproduction. The objective of this program is to increase women's awareness of issues related to their health reproduction, such as HIV/AIDS, endometriosis, cystitis, cervical cancer, and breast cancer.

Related to education programs, this study suggests the establishment of the Education Committee of Children in Sukowilangun Village. This committee has several objectives, including identifying and mapping infrastructure and education issues for children and children with special needs, and finding solutions to these problems. The second program of education is pre-marriage education by establishing training or education programs for the members of the community (couples) who want to marry. The objective of this programme was to prevent gender-related family problems. Two programs should be established in legal awareness programs: First, the establishment of Administrasi Cepat-Tanggap dan Ramah Anak or Children Responsive and Friendly Administration is employed to provide detailed and comprehensive data or information related to the children in Sukowilangun village, such as the number of children with special needs, school dropouts, children left by their migrant parents, abandoned children, and children with no birth certificate. The second program was to build a. The role of this unit is to prevent, report, and manage the impact of violence against women and children. The last recommendation relates to security and peace. The right of security and peace of the children at the village level could be met if the three other rights to health, education, and legal awareness have been fulfilled.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study provides a strategy for designing a safe and friendly environment for women and children, particularly in villages or rural areas. Research studies show that the place or environment in which women and children live, either in a city or in a rural area or village, poses a threat to them and makes them vulnerable due to sexual abuse, exploitation, and violence. To overcome these problems, a macro perspective could be adopted, requiring structural and cultural change as the main solution to the implementation of development programs, including providing the design of a safe and friendly environment for women and children. This study found that an unfriendly and unsafe environment for women and children in Sukowilangun Village results from poverty issues, leading to other issues such as migrant workers, domestic violence, changes in the lifestyle of migrant workers, children left by their

migrant parents, domestic violence against children, various family problems that may result in dropouts, delayed school progression, a lack of good manners among children, negligence of children, lack of attention to children, sexual harassment, juvenile delinquency, and early marriage. Other issues regarding children with special needs and illegitimate children of migrant workers working abroad have also emerged.

This study also shows that there are several institutions, both formal and informal, dealing with women's and children's issues, as well as finding solutions to the problems by conducting various development programs. Nevertheless, all of the above programs require improvement in several aspects, such as the developing numbers of groups and the structural change to provide a support system for women and children.

Based on the identification of previous social problems and indicators related to a safe and friendly environment for women and children, this study provides a design to build a positive environment for them. This design consists of two aspects: institutional network-building and program recommendations. Institutional network building refers to a network that connects some institutions in Sukowilangun Village, such as education, government, and community institutions. To build this network, the design could adopt three principles or strategies: participation and integration between women and children development programs. This strategy also involves various parties or community organizations, including the village government, professionals, scholars, and formal informal groups formed by rural community members. Moreover, program recommendations should be made to meet the fundamental rights of children and women, including the rights to health, education, legal advice, security, and peace. The change in cultural level, such as gender relations at the family level, is justifiable, as this relationship has caused children and women to suffer from vulnerable issues, including domestic violence against women and children. Further studies should focus on mechanisms or models to design a safe and friendly environment in rural areas that are geographically different, such as coastal areas.

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