

**WOMEN, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

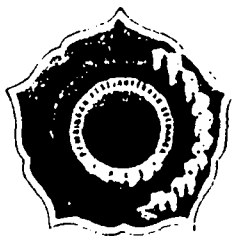
**A brief account of women's participation in a human  
waste disposal program in two urban  
areas in Indonesia**

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# PEMBINAAN KESEJAHTERAAN KELUARGA **PKK**

TIM PENGGERAK PUSAT

WOMEN, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

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## I. Introduction

One of the most pressing problems faced by densely populated cities is human waste disposal. This is particularly true in developing countries, where adequate sewage treatment facilities are lacking.

In better quarters, where people live in larger premises, the problem is solved by constructing a family septic tank and leaching field. But in low income areas it is impossible to do this; in these areas, substandard housing prevails : flop-houses, one-room units, improvised shelters and tiny semi-permanent houses. These dwelling places do not have the slightest piece of ground around them nor do the people have the money to build septic tanks litter. So they have no toilets. There is no other alternative for these people than to defecate in nearby ditches and canals.

This picture completely described MLATIHARJO, an over crowded area in the northern part of Semarang, the capital of the Province of Central Java, Indonesia.

Surakarta, another city in the same province, had the same problem in some areas, although the circumstances were different.

This brief report is intended to depict the unique way that people in those two cities are attacking their human waste disposal problems and how women participate in the program.

## II. The Case of Semarang

MLATIHARJO, with the administrative status of city ward, or urban village, is located in the northern part of Semarang municipality. Its administrator had long pondered about how to solve the most pressing problem of human waste disposal, particularly in neighbourhood XIV which was the most densely populated part of the ward. For want of toilets, the low income earners in this community defecated in a nearby ditch, which therefore was jokingly called "the longest toilet in town". The consequences are obvious : bad smell, flies, contagious diseases, etc; during the dry season, when there was no water in the ditch, the situation was even worse.

Looking for a solution, the administrator one day convened his people, numbering 650 families, to discuss how to provide adequate public toilets.

One of the families became so moved that he readily granted a piece of land, 3 x 10 meters, for use in the public interest. It was agreed unanimously that the money needed for construction of the toilets would be donated by every family living in the ward, irrespective of whether or not a family would benefit from the project. This was felt to be proof of brotherly feelings and of equality of responsibility.

It took 4 years collect enough money to finish construction of the toilets. At long last, on March 31, 1985 the project, which had cost Rp 2.500.000 (US \$ 1,500), was officially declared open.

There is a cluster of 15 toilets for women and another of 13 for men, there being more women than men in the ward. In the centre of each cluster is a well to provide water for flushing the toilets. Everyone who wants to make use of the toilets has to take along his or her own bucket.

When the physical construction of the toilets had been finished, the most arduous task began, that was how to change people's habits. For years they had been accustomed to defecate just in a ditch, now they had to go to a toilet and keep it clean. Motivating them to do so and controlling them has been entrusted to women who have joined the PKK, a nationwide Family Welfare Movement in which women are both the agents and the objects of activities.

It has also been the PKK cadres who have managed to kindle a sense of co-ownership of the toilets in the hearts of the people. People become increasingly aware that the toilets are common property and that everyone is responsible for their maintenance and cleanliness. Thanks to this attitude, the PKK's idea that every family should pay a small monthly contribution for the maintenance of the toilets was readily adopted.

Now there are 125 families who make use of the toilets. Each of them contributes Rp 300 (US \$ 0.20) a month. Some 80 families of an adjacent ward have been allowed to join; they have to pay more namely, Rp 500 (US \$ 0.30) a month.

A small committee in which women play an important role has been set up to manage the toilets. The task of the committee is to ensure that:

- people pay their contribution promptly;
- the finance is well managed;
- the toilets are properly maintained.

The committee has appointed a youngster to clean the toilets twice a day and another to collect the monthly contributions.

The monthly financial position is as follow:

Credit :	contributions from member families		
	125 x Rp 300 =	Rp	37,500
	contributions from neighbouring families		
	80 x Rp 500 =	Rp	40,000
			<hr/>
	Total	Rp	77,500
Debit :	fee for worker	Rp	10,000
	fee for contribution collector	Rp	15,000
			<hr/>
	Total	Rp	25,000
			<hr/>
	Balance	Rp	52,500

This monthly balance makes a fair sum of money in a year : Rp 630,000. Out of this, a small amount is spent on routine repair work. By collective decision of the ward, the remaining funds are earmarked for garbage disposal and street repairs. In this way, the environment of Mlatiharjo improves daily.

### III. The Case of Surakarta

Surakarta is another city in Central Java. It is an old town, once the residence of former Kings of Java. It is densely populated and of course it suffers from problems of human waste disposal.

In two of the wards of the city that suffer most, Nusukan and Jebres, a credit scheme has been developed for building toilets.

Any interested family can apply for a loan, which has to be repaid in 36 monthly instalments. No interest is charged, but calculation is made for an inflation rate of 1.36%.

An applicant must have some initial capital, not necessarily in money, but possibly in the form of manpower, sand, bricks, stones or cement. The instalments paid will be used to grant loans to other applicants, so it is of great importance that people pay their instalments promptly.

The project started only recently, in July 1987. It is a pilot project that was initiated by the Government with World Bank aid of US \$ 40.000. After a toilet has been built, there is a grace period of 2 months, and so, the first instalment on the loan will have to be paid by the end of November. It remains to be seen whether people will pay their instalments promptly.

The project has received a favourable response from the community. So far, 39 toilets have been built in Nusukan and 31 in Jebres, while many more are on the waiting list. The loans vary from Rp 100.000 (US \$ 62) to Rp 200.000. To prevent pollution of ground water, a technical agency has been appointed to design the construction and supervise the building of toilets. Where necessary, one septic tank serves 2 to 4 toilets. It has even happened that a septic tank was built under a street; but of course this is exceptional.

The Government is fully aware that, without the participation of the community, the project would be doomed to failure. Therefore, community leaders were included in the Committee, including women leaders, who came from the PKK (Family Welfare Movement) leadership.

As a first step, these community leaders and the Government officials involved in the project, took part in a training workshop in which complete information was provided about the project and a work plan was designed.

The community leaders are included in all phases of the project. The participation of the PKK cadres, comprises the following.

In the preparatory stage, women are entrusted with motivating families so they join the credit scheme and with providing all relevant information. The necessity of sound waste disposal must be inculcated in the people, who need to be encouraged to build toilets.

At the implementing stage, PKK cadres help control the non-technical aspects of construction, for instance, they ensure that building material is not overpriced. At this stage, they also start to explain how important it is to keep toilets clean, and what is the correct way of doing so.

Once the toilets are ready for use, the PKK cadres keep on untiringly motivating people to keep their toilets really clean and they control the execution of this. The question of cleanliness is again and again brought to the attention of participants in the monthly (routine) meeting of the PKK.

Another important role played by PKK cadres is that they remind people to pay their instalments when it is time. It is well understood that the project will not have new beneficiaries unless instalments are paid promptly.

In the execution of all these jobs, it has proved to be very helpful to use the DASA WISMA (Ten Family Groups) system since the span of control is not too wide for the leader in this system.

There are recent plans for this pilot project to be extended to the city of Semarang.

#### IV. Conclusion

These activities in Semarang and Surakarta are in line with the set PKK Programs which comprise :



(1) Comprehension and practical application of Pancasila \*)  
(3) Mutual selfhelp, (3) Clothing (4) Food and nutrition,  
(5) Housing and home management, (6) Education and training  
in skills, (7) Health, (8) Development of cooperatives,  
(9) Conservation of the Environment and (10) Sound Planning  
including Family Planning. It is particularly programs no 9,  
no 7 and no 2 that are executed in the human waste disposal  
project. For this reason, from national to grassroots level  
the PKK gives full support to the endeavour and is grateful  
that it is included at all stages of the project.

Jakarta, November 1987.

Mrs. K. Soepardjo Roestam

Chairperson

PKK Central Motivating Team

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\*) PANCASILA or Five Principles is the innate philosophy of  
life of the Indonesian people. Since independence in 1945  
it is recognized as the State Philosophy. Pancasila consists of:  
(1) Belief in One Supreme God, (2) Just and civilized humani-  
ty, (3) Unity of Indonesia, (4) Democracy by virtue of wisdom  
in deliberation and representation, (5) Social justice for  
the whole of the Indonesian people.